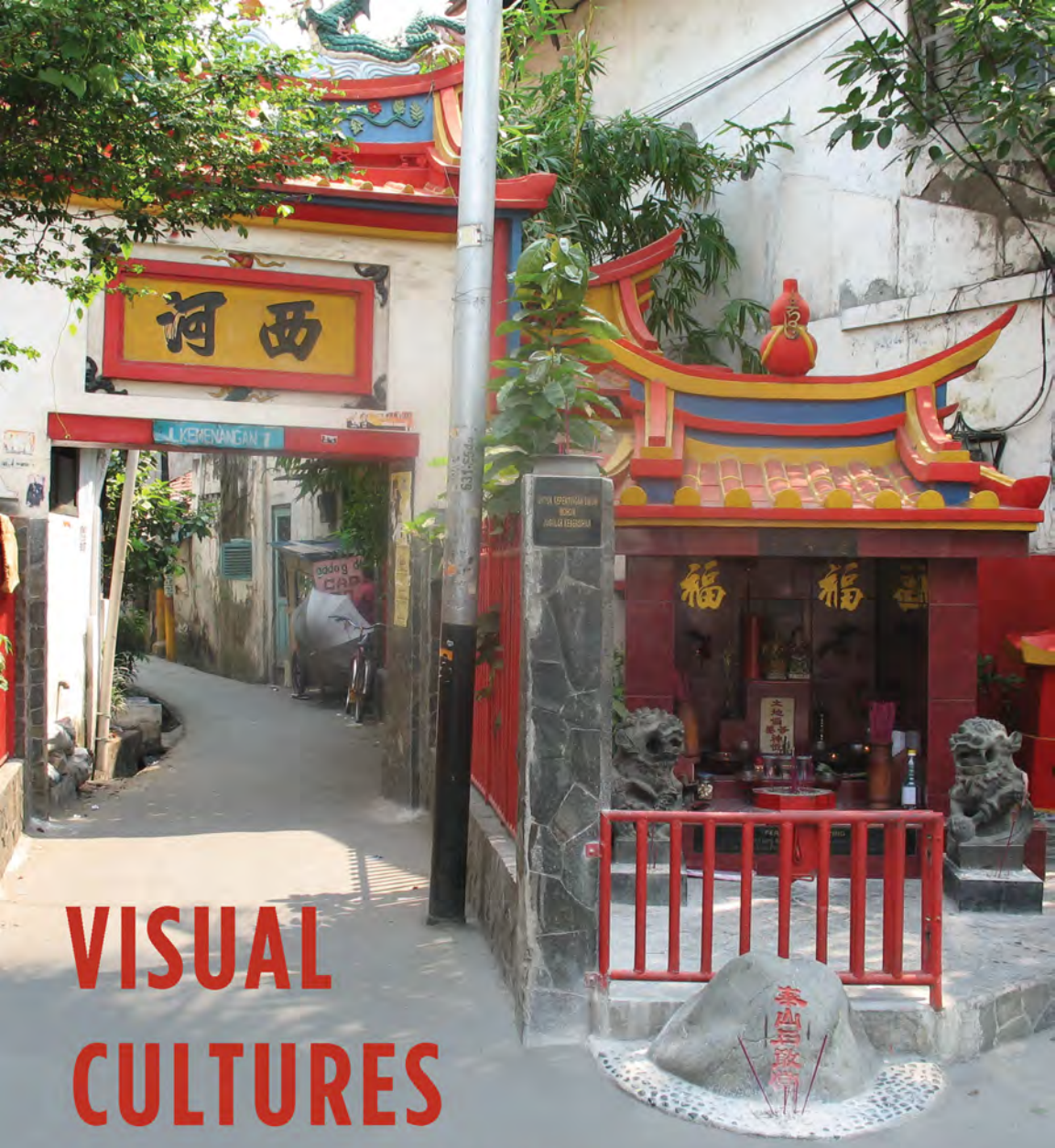

VISUAL CULTURES OF THE ETHNIC CHINESE IN INDONESIA

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For my peranakan family in Jakarta, Medan and Surabaya, who live like urban majority

In memory of Pak Ben and Pak Tjiong

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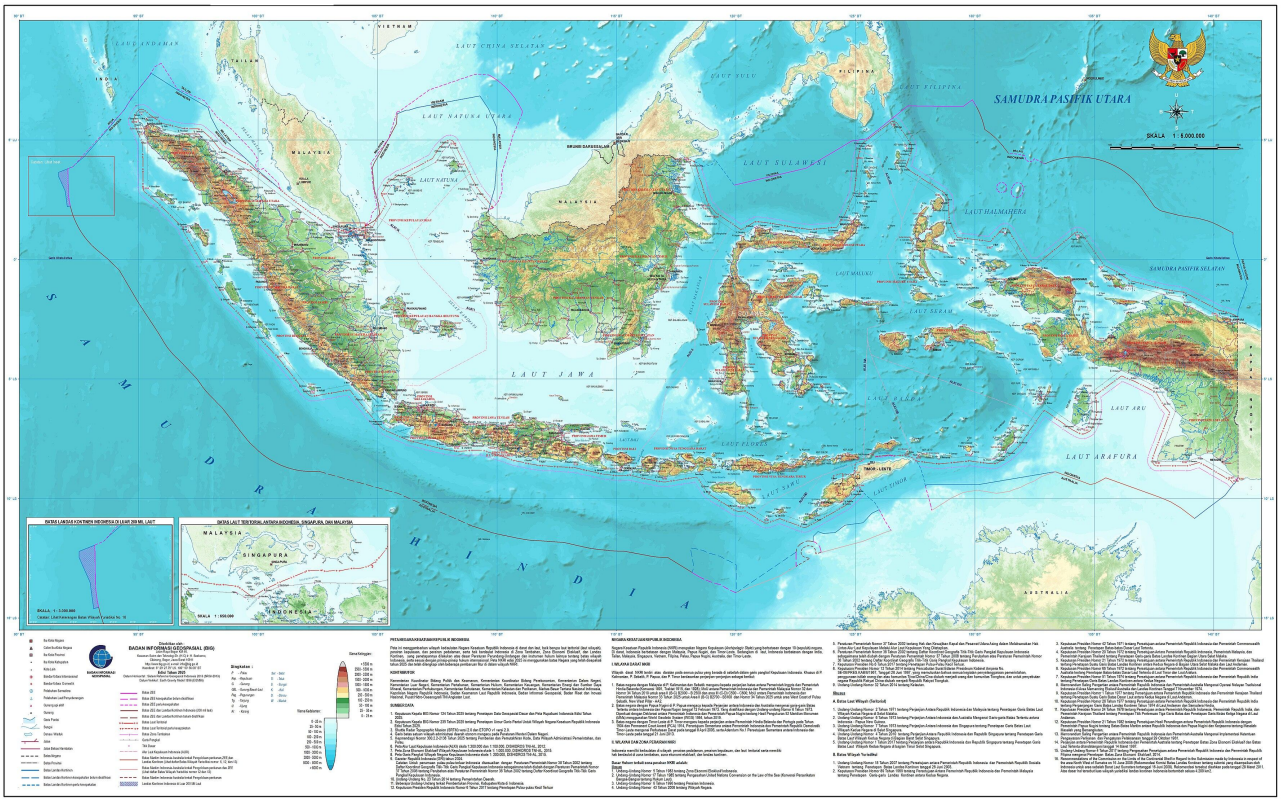

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Introduction

During some pleasant Dutch Summer days in 2005, I had a series of discussion with some friends in Amsterdam on issues around elite Chinese *peranakan* families in the 1930s Java and their self-representations through home videos and family photo albums.[1] The context for the discussion was the availability of some of these materials at the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD) where some of these friends worked. What interested me at the beginning were the visual mediums and the question of writing histories. I was also intrigued by the social and political effects of technology as the Indies (colonial Indonesia) entered the maturing age of mechanical reproduction. Only then, did I realize that I was in fact also concerned about questions around identities of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia as these were constructed domestically via the technology of imagery. I have been interested in issues around ethnic Chinese less as an expert on the subject, but more as a person of whom journalists today would call, unambiguously, "ethnic Chinese." Friends in Indonesia, however, are less certain about the term. We have been poking fun at each other that we are not only "ethnic Chinese" but also "confused (not Confucian) ethnic Chinese" – perhaps one that is regarded in Javanese slang as "*Cino wurung, Jowo tanggung, Londo pun durung*"[2] (no-longer Chinese, not-quite Javanese and not-yet Dutch). Some scholars would probably conceptualized us as peranakan, or better, "confused peranakan" – those who were born locally but not sure if his or her first language is Indonesian or a Chinese dialect, as they are often spoken at the same time. It seems thus more relieving to try to leave behind "Chinese heritage" and assume an "Indonesian" position – whatever this might mean. On the other hand, this aspiration for a "nationalist" position (-thanks to Suharto's New Order in which I grew up) in fact reflects even more my connection to "Chinese heritage."

When I looked cursorily at the visual materials my friends have obtained from NIOD (see chapter 6), I was, rather spontaneously, wondering how the home videos and photo albums might help illuminate historically the ambiguities of "ethnic Chinese" in Indonesia today (- even as the concerned elite families occupied a world that is radically different from our own). It would certainly be interesting to see analyses of the visual cultures of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia and consider how their private imaging shaped the ways in which they represented themselves in the public. What can the family photos, popular cartoons, houses and even the city they built tell us about the ethnic Chinese conception of themselves? What is it that they want to see of themselves and what is it that they want "us" to see? How did their ways of seeing themselves and the world, intertwine with those of other social groups and the state apparatus? How different were their techniques (or cultures) of seeing compared to those of the Eurasian or Arab elite peranakan families and members of the *kraton* (of Javanese rulers) as well as the commoners?

We know that back then camera and photograph were one of the key instruments for the colonial state to police and classify people in the Indies. They came together with police and prisons. Yet, what happened to these "same" technologies when they were used by private persons at different places? What were the social and political implications when the technologies of the state were popularized and domesticated, especially in the hands of the peranakan Chinese families? There are many more questions to come, but what I am suggesting is that the self-representations of the family life, indoor and outdoor (as these were depicted in photo albums, home videos and houses), could be fruitfully understood as part of the gradual self-formation of a class, a nation and identity, which is crossed in innumerable ways by shifting power relations under colonial and postcolonial conditions. The questions would thus not only be about the content or what is shown in the image as a simple expression of "truth" (as in the writing of social history), but also the social and political assumptions behind the framing and the staging of the image. It would also include historicization of vision as what Karen Strassler did in her *Refracted Vision*. Very few attempts in fact have been made at such analysis of the visual cultures of the ethnic Chinese ethnic. This deficiency can in part be attributed to the textual and verbal focus in most of the study on ethnic Chinese – where images, if utilized, are used merely as supporting materials rather than the subject of inquiries.

THE CHINESE AND THE VISUAL REGIME

Major research has been done on the social, political and cultural histories of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. There are many books out today on ethnic

Chinese (especially from Indonesia). They have been devoted to thoughtful analyses of important elements of Chinese societies, their political thoughts and relations to the state and other groups in Indonesian society.[3] These existing studies show how rich and complicated this field of inquiry is. At the same time it is useful to recognize that (with a few exceptions) the materials used in most of the research are textual and oral. Very little research, however, has been done on visual representations and their roles in shaping identities and politics of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. If we regard the treatment of the visual and material cultures of the peranakan Chinese, it is strangely apparent that the treatment (of say, architecture, food and clothing) is almost in terms of their exotic uniqueness, that is, as essentially an aesthetic issue (see chapter 8). Without denying the importance of this genre of research, we should open up a more fertile and equally complex ground, which would enable us to take more into account the disciplinary components in, say, the new type of house as a symbolization of wealth and (declining) power, to understand them not as merely elements of "cultural expression" but as themselves part of dynamic responses to the dilemmas and contradictions of the changing social formations within which they are embedded. In these visual representations we perhaps can see the piecemeal, often imperceptible, self-formation of a class undergoing a situation which remains to be analysed.

The interest on the visual however is more than an attempt to incorporate a "forgotten" analytical category. Rather, the visual could be seen as a political site for the rethinking of identity and cultures. Instead of seeing the social life of the ethnic Chinese as guaranteed by some shared visual cultures, this book explores the ways in which their different modes of visual representation help to produce, and are in turn produced by social conflict.

This book examines not only how the visual modes of representations expressed as well as shaped the experiences of the ethnic Chinese under the changing landscapes of power, but also explore complex and often contradictory issues and connections between visual representation, everyday life, political intentions and the urban contexts. It complements Rudolf Mrazek's *Engineers of Happy Land: Technology and Nationalism in a Colony* (2002) and Karen Strassler's *The Refracted Vision: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java* (2010). These books explored the experiences of people under colonial and postcolonial conditions as they encountered technologies and urbanization that had increasingly become part of their daily life. The responses were varied, but the conceptions of who they were and what they had become were profoundly shaped by the ways in which they experienced technology. Mrazek's work is centred on the historical experiences of Dutch and Javanese communities in the colonial time, and therefore very little discussion is devoted to the role and the experiences of ethnic Chinese communities. Yet, as Strassler points out, by the eve of World War II,

we could say that Chinese Indonesians had already become a loyal consumer of technology. But they were not only regular consumers. Instead they were involved in investing meanings into technologies by promoting and supplying them to the public (- this includes the dealership of building construction materials since colonial time). What is important about technology then is not only how it works functionally, but also how it changes the ways in which one think about his or her social and political identities.

This book is historically framed by the long twentieth century in which the rapid speed and scale of urbanization has been marked by the intermingling of various and often radically different regimes of power. The long century represents the passages of modernity in the interstices of colonialism and postcolonial condition. This era of "intertwined histories and overlapping territories" has made the twentieth century an age in temporal comparison.[4] In other words, it is difficult to understand a fragment of Indonesian history without encountering at the same time the spectre of what came before (and after). The ethnic Chinese (and other population groups of various ethnicities) for instance were forced to make a living under three profoundly different types of visual regimes (-the Dutch colonial rule, the Japanese military administration, and the decolonized Indonesian sociopolitical orders). Other examples include the postcolonial era, which contained its own contradictory and often irreconcilable though comparable scopic regimes (of Sukarno, Suharto and Post 1998-Indonesia). The changes and continuities of the postcolonial eras have left many ethnic Chinese with fragmentary understanding of who they are and what they have done to themselves and to other population groups. Framed within the dilemma, the questions and contradictions of the long twentieth century, this book thus aim at understanding some of the visual cultures of the ethnic Chinese as an enterprise for coming to terms with socio-economic and politico-cultural crisis under the changing regimes of representations.

This book analyses family photographs, a film, and a range of built "architectural" environment. The essays look at the ways in which these various modes of visual representations shaped and were shaped by how the ethnic Chinese confronted the period of economic dislocation and radical social change during Dutch colonialism and the nationalist struggles in the decolonized Indonesia (including the post-1965 and 1998 social environments). How did the ethnic Chinese communities (re)present themselves to both their domestic and outside world under the changing regimes of representation? How did they visualize, symbolically, their place in Indonesian society? How did the visual shape the "ambiguities" of the Chinese, the perception of the "economic" identity, and the forgetting of their involvement in politics, cultures and histories of the nation? More broadly, how did the visual address the interconnectedness of domestic life, the urban cultural milieu and ideologies of the state and the ruling class?

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT

With the political opening in Indonesia today, works on ethnic Chinese has been proliferating, but the issues remain complex and has become even more under the current waves of globalization. Many Chinese Indonesians recognize that they have freed themselves (or have been liberated) on one level but remain victims of their past on another. An illustration of this can be found in one of the recent studies on Chinese Indonesians concerning the practices and effects of assimilation policy imposed during the New Order era: *Chinese Indonesians: State Policy, Monoculture and Multiculture* (Suryadinata, 2004). The authors in this volume are all aware that several discriminatory regulations of the previous era remain active today raising the question of whether Suharto's legacy is over – including the canonical image that Chinese Indonesians are in one way or another always connected to the world of the (super) rich. While recognizing themselves as "minority," ethnic Chinese also realized that they have been seen as "capitalist." This seems to resonate with the view of Benedict Anderson who once indicated two paradoxical sociopolitical phenomena whose convergence is shaping the experience and conceptualization of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia.[5] On the one hand, the economic, technological and cultural forces of colonialism and globalization pushed conditions for the formation of "capitalistic" ethnic Chinese, while on the other hand, the state has generated identity and identification that constituted the discourses of othering the ethnic Chinese (whose long history of migration and integration went back to pre-colonial era) as "foreign" minority. Instead of using a particular label, such as "minority," or "capitalists" to illustrate, for instance, the visual cultures of ethnic Chinese – this book seeks to show how ethnic Chinese construct themselves in and through mechanical reproduction even as their own self-conceptions were subjected to hegemonic ideas, public images and the politics of the state at the time.

In our liberal-left academic world, we stigmatize those who are affiliated with the power elites in order to become rich conglomerates. We sympathize with those who are powerless as they are subjected to widespread public resentment and hatred. We also feel ambiguous towards works that focus on tracing "Chinese-ness" through various icons from the temples to deities as if they will soon be wiped out altogether less by politics than by Chinese own forces of economy. When looking at *Barongsai* (Chinese dragon dance) and reading the *cersil* martial art novels of Kho Ping Hoo we often forget that ethnic Chinese in Indonesia are also modernizers and they love technologies, art deco and Euro-American style houses. They have also been actively engaged in modernity like their Dutch and Indonesian counterparts. Some of them were courageous "dandies," not unlike the pre-war time Sukarno and Mas Marco Kartodikromo, who couldn't stand injustices. And they relentlessly

fashioned themselves (often unconsciously) beyond the norms and forms of a "colonial" society. But quite a few of them, like other Indonesians and "Dutch" masters, also look down on their poorer counterparts and despise their own housemaids even as their life are depended on the latter's servitude. The question is then in what ways could a historical work on the visual cultures of ethnic Chinese remain sensitive and critical to the present political dilemmas and social practices. Could the analyses of visual cultures of the Chinese ethnic group address the conditions of both the 1930s and, say, the 1990s?

WHO ARE THE ETHNIC CHINESE? WHOSE CHINESE?

The numbers of Indonesian of ethnic Chinese is never clear to me. According to the 2010 census, Indonesian of ethnic Chinese is estimated to be almost 3 million or 1.2 percent of the total population of Indonesia. Yet some people believe that it is 3–4 percent, which means 7–10 million.[6] What is even more interesting, and perhaps is the reason of why it is difficult to quantify "ethnic Chinese," is that some (again, how many?) ethnic Chinese don't feel the need to represent themselves as ethnic Chinese, for various reasons that are hard to explain. One of the main reasons is that they see themselves as "Indonesians" and anything else is less important. This consideration nevertheless points to a situation where to "become Indonesian" is not a process that is automatic, as for the ethnic Chinese the term is reachable only after certain acceptance by the state and the Indonesian public. The state (since colonial time) has made it a business to connect and disconnect "Chinese" and "Indonesia." This game (partly inherited from politics of *divide et impera*) of constructing self and other as well as those in between within the nation has a profound impact on not only who are the Chinese, but also whose Chinese?

The Dutch colonial state had little ambiguity over the category for what it wished (for all socio-economic reasons) was to create a "middle group" to politically avoid direct confrontation with the population it administrated. The "foreign orientals" served the purpose of "stabilizing" the relations between the "Europeans" and the "natives." The category "foreign oriental" could be used and blamed (often as scapegoat) to solve issues confronting the stability of the colony. Decolonization provided an opportunity to start anew. In 1963, Sukarno proposed the concept of *suku peranakan Tionghoa* (peranakan Chinese ethnic group) to position this ethnic group locally alongside other ethnic groups in Indonesia, for he believes that ethnic Chinese, like many ethnic groups in Indonesia, such as "suku Jawa, suku Sunda, suku Batak, suku Minang . . . and suku peranakan Tionghoa" are all Indonesians.[7]

This concept to eliminate the othering or middle-ing" of ethnic Chinese however was abandoned in President Suharto's Indonesia. Instead Suharto regime replayed the colonial "divide and conquer" strategy by installing the term "Cina" to othering ethnic Chinese. In 1967, a military officer formulated a rationale: "The term *Cina* refers not to an ethnic group but to a dynasty where Chinese race (*ras Cina*) came from" and "unlike *Tionghoa/Tiongkok* which carries negative psycho-political association for Indonesian people, *Cina* has been used in the past."[8] It is not clear how *Tionghoa* would carry "negative psycho-political association," but the construction of a name such as *Cina* with a focus on the "place of origin" serves to consolidate "Indonesia" as belonging to "non-Chinese" indigenous groups. And the reference to ahistorical dynastic past served to make *Cina* timeless. This proclamation (sanctioned by the military state in the name of "rakyat Indonesia") of portraying ethnic Chinese as perpetually foreign to local societies if not potentially royal to China has served to essentialize and externalize ethnic Chinese. It has also made it difficult to use concepts such as "migration," "transnationalism," and "diaspora" without the risk of replaying the connotations intended by the military.

I remember a conversation with an ethnic Chinese architect (see chapter 8) who started his work in Sukarno era and were fully committed to Sukarno's nation-building. When I mentioned to him that I was wondering how relevant ethnicity is to the identity of an architect. He was able to make clear that he would prefer to be referred as "ethnic Chinese Indonesian." The notion of "Chinese," when stand alone, is problematic. And, he added, "Please, . . . no diaspora." The "nationalistic" framework assumed by this architect and also Chinese Indonesian intellectuals is thus an attempt to dislodge the essentializing and diasporic discourse of the state in differentiating ethnic Chinese from other ethnic groups. The national framework that ethnic Chinese are striving for has also allowed them to locate themselves within the specificity of their local struggles without being too easily absorbed into the revival of Pan-ethnic Chinese identity worldwide following the rise of China. The nation-building discourse thus is a struggle for tolerance, inclusiveness and embrace of diversity with a strong sense of the challenge posed by class conflict that is stemming from economic disparity between ethnic groups but often framed under an opposition between the indigenous and ethnic Chinese population.

It is in this context that in the post-Suharto era, ethnic Chinese are dropping *Cina* to adopt "Tionghoa" a term associated with a new identity partly to counter the New Order's violence of category, partly to pay tribute to the earlier identity formation of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. Unlike *Cina*, which was associated with the feudalistic age of dynasty in China, "Tionghoa," as this term was first used in the early twentieth century Indonesia, carries with it the meaning of revolution, youth and newness against the old. The term is

also associated with Tiong Hoa Hui Kuan, the first modern social and educational movement in colonial Indonesia formed by ethnic Chinese, an association that subsequently inspired modern movements of other ethnic groups (including Javanese's Taman Siswa and Serikat Islam). In this sense, while Tionghoa could be seen as making a reference to China, its meaning is both "modern" and profoundly "local" if not synonym with emancipation, (transnational) national liberation movement and modern consciousness associated with the idea of Indonesia and nation-building.

When Suharto's Indonesia used *Cina* to refer to ethnic Chinese, the term is not only derogatory as it implies, as according to Suryadinata, "greedy, unclean and immoral (and) it was used only when indigenous Indonesians wanted to belittle or humiliate their Chinese counterparts,"[9] but it is also to take ethnic Chinese out of the history of Indonesia and nation-building. It is in this context that this book is taking part in the attempt to relocate ethnic Chinese in Indonesian history even as this is done discursively and incompletely through subjective interpretation of non-textual materials associated with popular cultures. I use the term visual not only to refer to the visual materials explored in the book, but also to the general challenge of visualizing the ethnic Chinese in their struggles over their identities, including moving from *Cina* to *Tionghoa*.

The post-Suharto era thus witnesses the increasing usage of "Tionghoa" or "peranakan Tionghoa" to refer to ethnic Chinese even though the term *Cina* now officially dropped by a presidential decree is still being used by the people (including younger ethnic Chinese). While mindful of the different terms and different associations in which ethnic Chinese are visualized, this book uses "ethnic Chinese," "Chinese Indonesian," "Tionghoa" or "peranakan Tionghoa" interchangeably. These terms connote some forms of locality associated with Indonesia where most of the lives of ethnic Chinese are shaped, not only by politics, but, as far as this book is concerned, by different forms of material and visual cultures, such as the built environment, photographs, cartoons and film.

STRUGGLE OVER REPRESENTATION

In 2013, I was contacted by Leo Suryadinata, the most dedicated historian and commentator of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, to write about the "role of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesian architects." My entry on "architecture" along with over 70 contributions would cover a broad range of professions, forming 3 volumes of book entitled (tentatively) *Peran etnik Tionghoa di Indonesia: dulu dan kini* (The roles of ethnic Tionghoa in Indonesia: Past and Present). Suryadinata has long been documenting the contributions of ethnic Chinese

in the nation-building of countries in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia. His works have gained new urgency as ethnic Chinese have begun to assert their identities in the climate of post-Suharto era. For this particular project on professions, Suryadinata followed the mission of Eddie Lembong, a pharmaceutical businessman and founder of Yayasan Nation-Building (Nabil) Foundation, an association formed in 2006, as represented by its name, to acknowledge and nurture the cross-cultural foundation of Indonesian nation (with particular focus on the roles of Tionghoa).

Mr. Lembong conceived this documentary project as a nation-building mission "to allow Tionghoa to recognize themselves and be recognized as contributors to Indonesian nation-building . . . and it is expected that materials from the books would serve as a source for a rewriting of Indonesian national history text book." This project stemmed from Mr. Lembong's feeling (especially after the 1998 May riots) that (even in the era of tolerance and embrace of diversity) Tionghoa have often (still) been considered by fellow Indonesians as "foreigners" and this according to Lembong, is due in large measure by the fact that Indonesian people know very little about the professional world of ethnic Chinese. Thus, Mr. Lembong declared, "Let's compile, document, and write the contributions of Tionghoa in Indonesia in all fields."

I accepted this invitation in the context of understanding Mr. Lembong's sentiment about the sense of self-denial and alienation as well as discrimination that Tionghoa has experienced especially since the time of Suharto, and thus the importance of representing the contributions of Tionghoa within the context of nation-building. As I was writing in a style of "who-is-who" in the making of Indonesian architectural world, I got interested to write about "real estate" as well, partly because this is a field that is widely known for its capitalist venture. I thought it would be important to show the diversity of Tionghoa by juxtaposing two professions. Back to back then chapters 6 and 7 belong to a single project, but they are distinguished by the manner in which they are presented. Chapter 7 (on architects) offers a list of "architects" presented (albeit inadequately) in a manner of who-is-who, whereas chapter 6 (on developers) moves a little beyond listing by offering an argument (thus an opinion) critical of what the developers have done to the city and urban life, especially to the poor people who were most affected by the real estate development. My first draft received a comment agreeing that "real estate companies by nature are to make money and obtain great profit, but one wonders if anything more can be said about this industry, which is rather positive as we are looking for some positive aspects." This comment is profoundly interesting as it seeks to move beyond seeing ethnic Chinese as only interested in business – a stereotype that the writing project ultimately seeks to overcome. What I have learned from being part of the project is that any representation

of ethnic Chinese today is also an engagement with a socio-cultural struggle over representation. Suryadinata sees this project as necessarily a long term one for "it took Suharto 32 years to forge Indonesians' attitude toward ethnic Chinese," he said. And therefore "it will take probably another 32 years for them to change their state of mind again."[10]

FINALLY, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE INDONESIAN?

"What does it mean to be Indonesian?" asked Karen Strassler in an epilogue to her wonderful book on Indonesian photography, *Refracted Vision*. Her book examines the ways in which the Indonesian nation is imagined from the position of ethnic Chinese and how photographic representation and practices both resolve and pose further the question of "what does it mean to be Indonesian?" Strassler asks this question at the end of her book suggesting, appropriately, that the meaning of Indonesia or being Indonesian could only be dealt with through an endless questioning of one's own identity. The formation of this question, as Strassler suggests, owes much to an understanding of the position of ethnic Chinese in the nation's history. Ethnic Chinese has been positioned historically as both an insider and outsider of the nation. In such structurally ambiguous position, I should add, ethnic Chinese feel the urgency (more than other social groups in Indonesian history) to approach the nation in terms of a question (rather than an answer), such as "what does it mean to be Indonesian?"

This question is as important as it is interesting, and in this book I seek to deal with it through analyses of photographic images, imageries and imagination of Indonesia. I seek to tease out the specific and multiple identities that characterized the private and public life of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia as they were represented in some visual fields.

THE SHAPE OF THE BOOK

This book consists of eight chapters with each covering particular form of visual representation and certain period of time in Indonesian urban history. Exploring different and certain aspects of visual representation, together they constitute a "visual field" that consists of a series (but never quite complete collection) of visual representation to make sense of Chinese identities in Indonesia. This approach suggests that a range of coverage (instead of focusing only on one genre) of visual representations is needed to capture the sense of interconnectedness of multiple ways in which identities are constructed by different individuals.

The plurality of the mediums (family photographs, film, cartoon and of the "architectural" environment) represents the multiplicity of urban life, which serves as the context for the representation of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. Urban life is characterized by jarring juxtaposition of different visual technologies. Putting together different mediums in one volume shows that when they are brought together they speak of the multiplicity of the visual and the urban. Each chapter can stand independently, and much like the visual field, which consists of discursive parts, the order of chapter shows different scenes but without ignoring a sense of time, of change. A genre per chapter is to help order our visual field so the book can be read as a series of different "scenes" with each showing a particular visual material and the way it shaped identities. And as a whole, these seemingly unconnected genres would enrich our understanding of identity formation in both specific and general way. Together they show the importance of visual representation and the nature of its discursive (but more nuanced if not more ambiguous) interpretations in shedding light on the identity formation of the ethnic Chinese and the conceptions of their politics as well as the politics of the country within which they are a part in both the past and the present.

Chapter 1, "The Riots," provides a "history of the present" by considering the politics of forgetting in the aftermath of May 1998 riots. It looks at architecture and urban space as a form of visual and spatial memory work, which have defined Chinese identity in the post-Suharto era. Chapter 2, "The Shophouse," offers a longue duree account of the shophouse as a building type associated with ethnic Chinese, which "spoke" through the changes of its form about the transformation of Indonesian society, culture and politics in relation to ethnic Chinese. Chapter 3, "Cartoons and *Cersil* (Martial Art Stories)," considers some popular cultures, such as cartoons and dime "martial art" novels produced by ethnic Chinese during colonial and postcolonial eras as a response to the political cultures of Suharto's New Order in defining the cultural identity of ethnic Chinese. Chapter 4, "The Film *Gie*," analyses the representation of ethnic Chinese in a film produced in the post-Suharto era about a Chinese youth activist. It shows how this film, as part of an attempt to rewrite history, reproduced as well as challenged the dominant image of ethnic Chinese in Indonesian society. Chapter 5, "Family Photo Album," interprets a family photo album of an elite Chinese peranakan family living in a late colonial era as a memory work to construct identity and culture of a bygone era. Chapter 6, "Developers," explores the roles of major property developers of ethnic Chinese descent in transforming urban space following the rise and fall of Suharto's regime. Chapter 7, "Architects," documents the role of Indonesian architects of ethnic Chinese background in shaping the expanded world of Indonesian architecture. Chapter 8, "The Lost Home," examines the representation of "Chinese houses" as heritage in Southeast

Asia through a review of Ronald Knapp major works, and how his heritage framework constitutes "Chinese-ness" as a culture rather than a political category.

These eight essays were written over the past fifteen years. Several of them have been published in different places under different themes and some are unpublished and kept in Indonesian language. They have been slightly adapted for this collection, which I hope would allow us to see the visual field as something that subjectivity had to at least pass by in order for identities to be formed and transformed.

Chapter 1, "The Riots," was previously published as "Remembering and Forgetting May Riots: Architecture, Violence and the Making of 'Chinese Culture' in the Post 1998 Jakarta," *Public Culture*, vol. 15, no. 1, Spring 2003: 149–77. [Reprinted in *The Appearances of Memory* (Duke University Press, 2010)]

Chapter 2, "The Shophouse," was published as "The *Ruko*: Changing Appearances and Association of Shophouses in Urban Indonesia," *International Journal of Islamic Architecture*, 1, 2, 2012: 217–41. [Reprinted in *After the New Order* (Hawaii University Press, 2013)]

Chapter 3, "Comics and *Cersil*," was published as "Master Q, Kung Fu Heroes and the Peranakan Chinese: Asian Pop Cultures in New Order Indonesia," in *Popular Culture and Co-productions and Collaborations in East and Southeast Asia*, edited by Nissim Otmazgin and Eyal Ben-Ari (eds.), Singapore: NUS Press in association with Kyoto University Press, 2012: 185–206.

Chapter 4, "The Film *Gie*," was published as "A Hero in Passage: The Chinese and the Activist Youth in Riri Riza's *Gie*," in *Film in Contemporary Southeast Asia: Cultural Interpretation and Social Intervention* edited by David Lim and Hiroyuki Yamamoto for Routledge's Media, Culture and Social Change in Asia Series. London: Routledge, 2011: 130–46.

Chapter 9, "The Lost Home," was based on book reviews published in *Pacific Affairs*, 86, 2, 2013 and 87, 4, 2015.

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family in Canada, especially Hong for everything, and Leia who, sometime in the future, might be interested to know what this book is about, so I hope.

NOTES

1. This section is partly drawn from Kusno, "Visualizing."
2. In Indonesian translation: "Cina ya tidak lagi, Jawa ya tanggung, jadi Belanda (Barat)pun belum."
3. Books (in English and Indonesian) with a focus on Chinese Indonesian alone that have been published since 2000 include: Aji, *Tionghoa Surabaya dalam Sepak Bola*; (2010); Chua, *Chinese Big Business in Indonesia*; Coppel, *Studying Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia*; Dawis, *The Chinese of Indonesia and Their Search for Identity*; Dawis, *Breaking Barriers;* Heidhues, *Golddiggers, Farmers, and Traders*; Hoon, *Identitas Tionghoa Pasca Suharto*; Lindsey and Pausacker (ed.) *Chinese Indonesians*; Lohanda, *Growing Pains*; Noorjanah, *Komunitas Tionghoa di Surabaya*; Perkasa, *Orang-orang Tionghoa dan Islam di Majapahit*; Purdey, *Anti-Chinese Violence in Indonesia*; Reid, *Sojourners and Settlers*; Sulardi, *Pao An Tui*; Tan, *Etnis Tionghoa di Indonesia*; Setiono, *Tionghoa dalam Pusaran Politik*; Suryadinata (ed.). *Ethnic Chinese in Contemporary Indonesia*; *Chinese Indonesians: State Policy, Monoculture and Multiculture*; Suryadinata, *Understanding the Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia.*
4. The term "intertwined histories and overlapping territories" is from Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*.
5. Anderson, "Perspective and Method."
6. Suryadinata estimates that the ethnic Chinese might have reached 6 million people. See: Suryadinata, *Understanding the Ethnic Chinese*; see also Suryadinata et al., "The Ethnic Chinese: A Declining Percentage."
7. Suryadinata, "Anti-Chinese Riots in Indonesia."
8. Sudharmono, "Surat Edaran Presidium Kabinet Ampera."
9. Suryadinata, "Cina or Tionghoa?"
10. Leo Suryadinata's cited in Masutomo, "Indonesia slowly changes its attitudes."

Part I

VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

Chapter 1

The Riots

For almost two decades now, Indonesia has celebrated the May 1998 demonstration (known as *reformasi*) as a triumph of courage if not of democracy in the nation. To the amazement of the Indonesian people, the authoritarian and repressive regime of Suharto was toppled by a bold group of students together with a provisional, loosely connected "coalition" made up of frustrated middle-class families, calculating military figures, opportunistic ministers and bureaucrats, street hoodlums and the urban poor. Yet, in spite of such stirring success and solidarity, for many others, the May *reformasi* remains a forgotten tragedy. Riots, which took place for over 35 hours and in approximately 50 locations throughout metropolitan Jakarta, involved the state's security apparatus as it sought to create a basis for the declaration of martial law as a "final" strategy for saving the collapsing regime. Thousands were killed in the ensuing disorder – including hundreds of poor looters trapped in ransacked lots – and hundreds of women and girls were gang raped and tortured in these riots.[1] The violence was directed, both systematically and spontaneously, at Indonesians of ethnic Chinese descent, whom many (including segments of the Suharto regime) deemed responsible for the nation's problems. The burning and plundering of Chinese property, as well as the gang rapes of ethnic Chinese women, were carried out by certain military groups and ordinary Indonesians who were transformed into a violent mob, often at the incitement of the Suharto army itself.

The targeting of Chinese Indonesians has been attributed to the strength of their economy, the weakness of their political position and the sense that Chinese Indonesians are not Indonesian enough – though few citizens would think of driving them out of the country entirely.[2] The Chinese, simultaneously admired and disliked by the Indonesians, have been a frequent target of rioting. Indeed, anti-Chinese riots have taken place since the formation of

Indonesian nationalism in the early twentieth century under Dutch colonial rule, and perhaps even before.[3] Over time, such riots have become a familiar phenomenon, so familiar that the justification(s) for the anti-Chinese riots have never been clear even to those involved.[4]

However familiar anti-Chinese riots may have been to Indonesians, the gang rapes of ethnic Chinese women in May 1998 were without precedent and went well beyond the recognizable framework of violence created by the long history of anti-Chinese activities.[5] The gang rapes introduced new, more extreme and lasting violence into the vocabulary of anti-Chinese sentiment. Unlike previous anti-Chinese riots, which were forgotten after a few days by returning to "business as usual," gang rape does permanent damage that cannot be erased, replaced (like commodities) or simply put out of mind (like other, more recognizable forms of Indonesian riots). Stories of rape, as Siegel points out, continue to haunt the public through narratives of the victims' depression, disease, suicide, pregnancy and family rejection.[6]

Though the gang rapes have generated immense outrage and shame at all levels of society, Indonesians have not yet found a language to respond to or articulate this new mode of violence. Silence perhaps constitutes the only language for these events, thereby enacting still further violence through the suppression of the stories themselves. Siegel sees this silence as a form of national trauma, an effect of the failure of the national community to cope with its own barbarism: this "failure appears in the lower class people who raped and in the upper class elements of the political class who allowed them to do it."[7] Meanwhile, the majority of the victims still suffer from the event, and various new governments have kept quiet or denied its occurrence.[8] The state hopes that the nation will arrive at a condition of normalcy by stifling the violent memories of past horrors. In the words of former president B. J. Habibie following his visit to the most damaged riot site at Glodok, a retail business centre known as the Chinatown of Jakarta, two weeks after the riots: "We should all quickly get out of this problem. We are all Indonesians and live in the land of Indonesia. We do not discriminate against any race, religion, and ethnicity. We do not have to worry about that."[9] The rapes have profoundly shaped the ways in which the riots as a whole are understood, remembered and forgotten. Rudi, a Chinese Indonesian whose shop in Glodok was burnt out, indicated that "it is difficult for me to describe (the event) and furthermore, I don't want to remember what had happened. It is just too painful."[10] The nation's government, the larger populace, including the Chinese Indonesians and the victims, are all variously involved in the suppression of trauma. They all share the difficult task of integrating the gang rapes that has marked the May riots into their own narratives of the past as well as the future.

This chapter centres on the relationships between memory and place, between identity formation and the change of social consciousness. In this

sense, this project can be seen in terms of the growing interest in violence and collective memory. Over the past two decades, scholars in cultural studies in particular have focused on the ways in which individuals, groups and nation-states have remembered catastrophe, genocide and war through various forms of representation – be they monuments, memorials or public spaces and squares – as mnemonic devices that help to reflect on those events and regulate public memories.[11] Yet it is crucial to recognize that most of these studies have their particular focus on a specific material object, such as a monument or memorial, constructed under an explicit programme and intended to represent events of the past. By focusing on the fact of commemoration, the studies in question rarely look at objects that were *not* built for a commemorative purpose but that are equally significant in registering, as well as forgetting, memories of past events. The everyday built environment, like monuments constructed for commemoration, enacts the dynamics of memory and forgetting, but it operates often without demanding a state of spectatorial concentration to gain effect.[12]

It is precisely the everyday built environment, the changed cityscape of Jakarta, that brings the demands to represent trauma into visible relief even as it yields to the difficulty involved in such expressions. This chapter examines the spatial effects of the 1998 riots in the area of Glodok and the buildings recently erected to replace those that were ransacked and burnt down. My objective is to delineate the ways in which these new spaces both represent and avoid this trauma, enabling a play of remembering and forgetting that contributes to the efforts of ethnic Chinese to retrospectively cope with the violent events in the midst of a changing political environment. I then turn to an illustrated novel by the Indonesian writer Seno Gumira Ajidarma that depicts the most extreme events of the May riots: the gang rapes of ethnic Chinese women. If the rebuilt spaces of Glodok engage with these acts by way of suppressing them, Seno's story concerns the effect of that suppression and the ways in which it opens up certain political possibilities. Set in the year 2039, the narrative construction constitutes a temporal response to the difficulty of coping with the trauma of the May riots. By examining both the power and the problematics of such representations, this chapter aims to show their role in reformulating traumatized time and space, in reimagining identities, memories and political consciousness.

HOW TO DEAL WITH TRAUMA? HOW TO CREATE A NEW IMAGE?

On May 26, 1998, about two weeks after the riots had killed hundreds of people and destroyed over 4,500 shops in the Glodok area, President Habibie

visited the site of destruction and met with the victims. The president's visit, according to Abdul Kahfi Bakri, West Jakarta's vice governor for governmental affairs at the time, was significant as an effort to show sympathy to ethnic Chinese shop owners who had suffered from the disaster.[13] It was hoped that the visit would generate a trust among them towards the government. Habibie's government knew perfectly well that the first step to revive the damaged economy of Indonesia was to build up Glodok again. It was clear to Habibie that the way Glodok was to be treated would have an important impact on the economy and the image of the country.[14] Habibie thus remarked: "I suggest that we all work together to uphold peace, unity and work together to restore and upgrade the order of the economy that we had enjoyed before."[15]

In recommending that the country return to the previous, prosperous state, Habibie also maintained a persistent and problematic image of Glodok as simultaneously the place of the Chinese and the centre of the well-being (or sickness) of the national economy. Such was the response of the Indonesian state. Yet what was the reaction of Glodok's residents to these proposals?

> But how are we going to deal with the *trauma*, Mr. President? I don't understand how the looting could take place for two days in the daylight. We cried. But what we cried for was not even clear to us. The military commander and the head of the police had repeatedly said that they would guarantee security, but the looting still took place. How to build up a new image, a new economy in Glodok with an Indonesian spirit . . .?[16]

There are at least two elements of this response that deserve attention. First, the word "trauma" is spoken in English, indicating its foreignness to the Indonesian language.[17] When used by this resident of Glodok, the term can be said to demonstrate the foreignness of the May riots and the unprecedented violence of the gang rapes that they contained. In this sense, *trauma* is also used to suggest the unrepresentable and incomprehensible suffering of the rape victims. Thus the voices that described the physical destruction of properties fray a path for the expression of the violence of gang rapes, as trauma cannot be assimilated into the Indonesian language.[18] As I will show, this otherness, as well as the fear and confusion it causes, is registered in various modes of expression. The second element concerns an awareness that even the government, which had been traditionally relied upon for protection, could not guarantee the residents' security. Thus, the ethnic Chinese community found itself in an uncertain and potentially vulnerable position. The state could not be trusted; the Indonesian middle class and the frustrated underclass could not be counted on. The residents give us a sense that, by simply reconstructing the previous economic order, the Chinese in Glodok would remain subject to attack and racial prejudice. Instead of following the suggestion of Habibie to restore the economic order "that we had enjoyed before," Glodok's residents

looked for the creation of a new image. To understand what kind of image the Chinese Indonesian created to cope with the aftermath of the riots, we need to examine the buildings recently constructed in Glodok to replace those that were destroyed. How is space reconfigured to reimagine a time of trauma?

GLODOK PLAZA: DREAMING THE FUTURE, AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF REPLACEMENT

Glodok Plaza, then the largest electronics and computer centre in Indonesia, was built in 1976, housing 600 shops. It was torched on May 14, 1998. A reporter recorded the event in this way:

> Glodok Plaza stands at the center of Jakarta's commercial district, Chinatown. Muladi, a security officer, watched as more than two thousand people walked to the plaza at 4:00 p.m. Some carried bags of stones, others with tools to pry open the gates. A few carried gasoline bombs. The police fired in the air, but the mob ignored them. Eventually the police stepped aside. Glodok Plaza was ripped open and burned out.[19]

Chinese Indonesians remembered the riots with an awareness that similar outbreaks might return. A year later, a small group of ethnic Chinese held a commemoration of the event at the ruins of the Plaza. With white cloths tied to their foreheads and candles in hand, the participants laid down a long white cloth, bearing the words, "we don't want to be victimized again," on the ruins of the building.[20] This, however, is the only act of remembrance that has taken place at the plaza.

At the beginning of 2000, Glodok Plaza was rebuilt in a manner that intimates the dynamics of remembering and forgetting after the May riots.[21] According to the general manager of Glodok Plaza, the rapidity of this reconstruction can be attributed to the name of Glodok, which is "already familiar in the mind of the people. Everyone knows Glodok locally and internationally. That is why, even though we have many new malls [in Jakarta], the prestige of Glodok has never faded away."[22] The area of Glodok is remembered not for its recent social and political violence but rather for its long-standing distinction. As a private enterprise remade to rebuild their businesses, Glodok Plaza reappeared in a new form to strengthen this image of glory and prosperity (Figure 1.1).

A new design was laid out to cover the remaining structure. P. T. Airmas Asri, the designer of the new Glodok Plaza, pointed out that the company won the design competition because it was able to give Glodok Plaza "a strong image of a center of electronics and computers in the new millennium."[23]

Figure 1.1 The new Glodok Plaza, 2000 (courtesy of the author).

The façade of the building projects this notion by way of decorative, colourful and festive features made of steel, glass and aluminium, all of which are visible from afar. Large billboards, facing the main street, exude a high-tech, transparent quality. The new façade is complemented by an inviting landscape that features greenery, fountains and open spaces leading to the entrance.

The main challenge, however, is not in the treatment of the façade but rather in the task of designing "a new interior space within the existing old structure."[24] The new interior is guided by the principle of "brightness." To move the building, architecturally, from darkness to light is to open up the prospects for the future. This move, from the dystopian to the utopian, could only be authorized, of course, by a suppression of the past terrors embodied within the framework of its architecture. To eliminate the previous gloomy spaces, parts of the old structure were demolished, creating more internal open space and light. Several atriums were constructed throughout the building, allowing every shop to face an open atrium space and thus "erasing the impression of filth, darkness, and old and providing a sense of order. . . . The subsidiary atriums will enable visitors to enjoy the moment of shopping in every part of the building. The tenants will also enjoy the same spatial effect no matter where his [or] her shop is located."[25] These subsidiary atriums are all connected to an elliptical, main atrium at the entrance hall. Designed with

careful attention to *feng shui*, this main atrium features a water fountain at its centre to cool down the element of heat believed to be embedded in the area of Glodok.[26]

The conscientious concern for *feng shui* contrasts sharply with the attention granted to the commemoration of the riots. Indeed, what is remarkable about the design strategy of Glodok Plaza is the complete erasure of all traces of the old structure and, by extension, the memories of riots. While the existence of the new building certainly resulted from the May riots, and while it was rebuilt from the remaining structure, the principal architectural concept allows for no mention of the unrest itself. What have been exposed are architectural features that supposedly enable consumers to identify the building with the electronic and computer age of the new millennium. Glodok Plaza ostensibly celebrates a future electronic festival, not a past traumatic event. The building shows itself as cheerful and inviting. It reaches out through its billboards. It tries to offer a dream of the virtual world instead of the memories of the horrific and very real past. There is optimism that technology will bring "light" to overcome the darkness of the past. The structure of the old building that carries the trace of violence is buried under layers of new materials and, ultimately, by electronic accessories. Overlain by the imagery of the present and the future, the trace of the old structure is gone, though it ironically still supports the new building.

Built on the burden of memories of violence are layers of computerized lightness that connect customers to new spaces. In addition, a so-called e-market place has become a component of the central facilities. As part of their leasing contracts, all the tenants have been given access to operate business-to-business transactions through the website.[27] The manager promotes the building as "the first internet-ready mall, which provides e-commerce through www.e-glodok.com and can be accessed by businesspeople from all over the world."[28] As "the first shopping center in Southeast Asia that brings together the fiscal and the virtual worlds,"[29] the plaza is not intended, therefore, to be a site of memory. In fact, all traces of the riots are eliminated. One does not even need to visit the place to buy goods. There is now no emotional burden of visiting, seeing and remembering the violence that was done there. The space of violence is reconfigured to imagine a future through bypassing the historical moments of trauma.

PASAR GLODOK: COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE AND THE DISPLACEMENT OF PAST HORROR

First constructed in 1971, Pasar Glodok (Glodok Bazaar) was burnt down during the riots. Completely rebuilt as a mall consisting of over 1,800 shops,

the new Pasar Glodok – like Glodok Plaza – makes no reference to the violent events that led to its own destruction.[30] But if Glodok Plaza avoids these traumas through the language of a timeless and placeless future of information technology, Pasar Glodok enacts its own elusion by speaking of the area's architectural and political history. Built in what has been called an architectural style of the Indies, or Batavia, Pasar Glodok seeks to impress the public with its colonial heritage (Figure 1.2). The president director of Pasar Glodok states that the design is consistent with the strategy of the city government to revive the architectural style of colonial Jakarta for tourism. The area of Glodok is located at the edge of the old section of Jakarta, where many Dutch buildings from colonial time are situated. After the May riots, for commercial purposes, the city government decided to ease building permit regulations to rebuild Glodok as part of the revitalization project of Jakarta's colonial town.[31]

The symbolism of Batavia is expressed at the exterior through the use of Ionic columns at the entrance, brown and orange geometrically corniced walls, curvilinear ornamentation on the gates and the detailed building lines suggestive of what is known as postmodern classicism. In this sense, Pasar Glodok can be aligned with the architectural style of Batavia in its syncretic use of Western classical and Indies forms. It endeavours to remind the public

Figure 1.2 The new Pasar Glodok, built in the architectural style of (post)colonial Indonesia, 2002 (courtesy of the author).

that Glodok was once part of Batavia and that the pedestrian spaces of Glodok will "attract tourists from various countries and the Jakartan who would like to enjoy the open air of Glodok."[32] Aspects of Dutch colonial architecture, once emblems of political authority, are transformed and given new meanings by virtue of their status as guarantees of a future city of tourism, rather than one of an oppressive past. Soon, according to Sutardjianto, mayor of West Jakarta at the time, all warehouse spaces found in that area will have to stop their operations and be turned into tourist-related facilities such as hotels, restaurants, souvenir shops, cafés, theatres and other amenities.[33]

The Indies architecture of Pasar Glodok, however, carries an ambivalent connotation. The syncretism of Batavian architecture is often an uneasy one, creatively awkward in its mixtures of Western, Betawi-Sundanese, Javanese and Chinese elements. Yet, in Pasar Glodok, these various elements have been abstracted to such an extent that they blend seamlessly into one another and therefore constitute an architectural whole. This brings to mind disquieting thoughts. Is not the architecture of Pasar Glodok – in spite of its abstraction, in spite of its attention to the history and heritage of the location – a response to the situation of trauma, remembering, and forgetting for the ethnic Chinese? Is not Pasar Glodok the new image that was envisioned by President Habibie, who suggested that "we all work together to uphold peace, unity and work together to restore and upgrade the order of economy that we had enjoyed before?"[34] Does not Pasar Glodok express an aspiration of a harmonious community that – in the happy company of tourism – becomes suspended from memories of violence?

On May 14, 2001, three years after the riots, a group of Chinese Indonesians in white mourning dress carried black banners and photos of the May riots, commemorating the event right in front of the new Pasar Glodok. "We do this to remind the public, especially the Chinese Indonesian, to courageously speak up and demand that government respond to the violence of the May riots"[35] (Figure 1.3).

The commemorators carried photos that asked for an acknowledgement of what was *really* going on there. They retraumatized the space of violence against the new temporal imaginings offered by the spatial configuration of Pasar Glodok. For some, the tragedy remains in darkness. It is hidden and muted, not least by the new architecture built on and over the site of the riot. If one walks behind the wall of the new Pasar Glodok, the remnants of riots can still be found. As for the architecture of Pasar Glodok, while it speaks of old Batavia in ways that are somewhat crude, it also totally fails to address the violent history of the building's location. The commemorators, the photographs and the ruins behind the building register its memories of violence. They break the architectural order that seeks to be distant from the past horror.[36]

Figure 1.3 Commemorators carried photos of the May riots in front of the new Pasar Glodok, 2001. *Source*: *Media Indonesia*, Mei 14, 2001.

THE RETURN OF "CHINESE CULTURE"

Whether confirming Glodok's prospects for the future technological world or endorsing its historic past, the architecture of both Glodok Plaza and Pasar Glodok that I have described here drew overwhelmingly on non-Chinese architectural forms. Yet these forms developed in ways that are specific to the Indonesians (including the ethnic Chinese) who, in their attempts to cope with the May riots, produced this kind of amnesiac architecture that seeks to suppress, if not eliminate, the past horror. Glodok Plaza replaces memories of the riots by harnessing the high-tech futuristic language of architecture. Pasar Glodok, on the other hand, displaces the traumatized time and space by fulfilling the desires of the government to reinstate the coherent image of a peaceful colonial heritage town. The connection that these buildings have made to the future and the past is completely devoid of any reference to their recent histories of violence. If these architectures indicate a general need for *not* speaking Chinese after the May riots, other buildings both in and outside the Glodok area give frank and full expression to an ostensibly Chinese identity.

A building called Candra Naya, located about 100 metres south of Glodok, served as the well-known house of the Dutch-appointed Chinese major in the

Figure 1.4 Candra Naya, a nineteenth-century house built in a Chinese architectural style, surrounded by modern skyscrapers, 2001 (courtesy of the author).

nineteenth century.[37] This house, which is understood to be the city's largest and most complete building in the Chinese architectural style, has recently been the subject of a dispute.[38] While the municipality of Jakarta promotes the preservation of old buildings from colonial times for the sake of tourism, Candra Naya, the only surviving Chinese house protected under the city's historic preservation codes *(Monumenten Ordonnantie)*, is strangely subjected to demolition and relocation. For reasons that are not entirely clear, Candra Naya today is sandwiched between the skyscrapers of a hotel, apartments and a shopping mall (Figure 1.4).

The back section and the left and right sides of the house were demolished in 1995. The remaining front and middle sections of the house were then to be relocated to the Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park, a theme park on the outskirts of the city, often associated with Suharto's regime, which celebrates the diversity and development of Indonesia, though it totally ignores the Chinese contributions to the nation. The owners of the skyscrapers are Chinese Indonesians, and they are perfectly aware that they have violated (or been allowed to violate) the city's laws. But with Candra Naya in the way, they felt they could not make a profit. In other words, Candra Naya is seen as blocking the *feng shui* of the skyscrapers. To hide the controversy, security

guards are employed to prevent visitors from viewing and even photographing the building. News of Candra Naya's situation spread beyond the confinement of the gate. It outraged activists and intellectuals of both Chinese and non-Chinese backgrounds. Their protest was sufficient to prevent the owners of the skyscrapers from getting rid of the house.

In post-1998 Jakarta, however, the process of demolishing Candra Naya is clearly understood as undemocratic. Several meetings have since been held, including consultation with the spirit of the house, who is apparently very upset with what has happened to it.[39] At the meeting table were those who would like the house to be moved to a different site (for economic and practical reasons) and those who feel that it should remain (for religious, social and political rationales). According to the latter perspective, Candra Naya was not only a house of a colonial Chinese major. It was also the headquarters of Sin Ming Hui, a social organization set up to serve and protect the right of the ethnic Chinese during the early years of Indonesian Independence, when many of them were abandoned, attacked and killed.[40] Moreover, the propinquity of the house to Glodok has made it suitable as a site of commemoration for the May riots. Given this dual historical significance, this group feels that the building should not be removed from its location. Instead, they seek to save Candra Naya from the abuses of capitalism and reimagine it as a symbol of violated space that, when connected to the event of the May riots, could critically reflect on the traumatized space of Glodok.

Some of the most significant elements of Chinese architecture – the courtyard, the shape of the roofs, the engravings – are visible in Candra Naya but are no longer present in the homes of ethnic Chinese residents of Jakarta. Yet, the importance of Chandra Naya lies not only in these architectural attributes as signs of a disappearing history; the home also has a symbolic value for both the present and the future of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia.[41] We might think that this awareness of the possibilities for resistance is enabled by a condition of postmodernity, but it is much more than that.[42] The attempt to make a connection between the nineteenth-century Chinese house and the identity of the Chinese Indonesian today stems from the memories of the violence of the May 1998 riots. The appearances (as well as the disappearance) of Candra Naya in the consciousness of ethnic Chinese also grows from the awareness of the nonexistence of "the *political* site of memory practices"[43] that would mediate the symbolic destruction of "Chineseness" during the May riots.

If the struggle over Candra Naya represents the twilight of architecture that conveys a Chinese presence in Glodok, the Chinese temple with its visible elements of Chinese architecture continues to symbolize the Glodok's rootedness in Chinese culture. During the 2001 Chinese New Year, Vihara Dhrama Bakti, an old temple in Glodok, attracted some two thousand people

who came from various parts of the city to join in the prayer for peace, safety and prosperity.[44] Meanwhile, the lion dance, or *barongsai*, a popular acrobatic dance performed with lion models made of cloth and paper, suppressed during the time of Suharto for its alleged Chinese roots, has been staged widely on various occasions.[45] It attracted people (including non-Chinese) from various places.[46] The temple, the *barongsai* and the Chinese New Year have all been "locked" indoors since 1967, by presidential instruction.[47] The lifting of the law banning Chinese cultural expression in public has stimulated the revival of Chinese culture and language. Chinese characters have begun to appear in public spaces, and more and more Indonesian newspapers are printed in Chinese language.[48] From the middle of the year 2000, some developers have incorporated explicit elements of Chinese architecture into the shops aimed at Chinese buyers. For instance, with the shophouses promoted by *Kota Wisata*, one of the largest private housing companies in Jakarta, the whole shopping complex is turned into a Chinese village.[49] The shophouse approaches the image of traditional China in ways that evoke a modern picturesque theme park through a clearly overstated portrayal of Chinese culture. Its playfulness manifests the difficulties of constructing Chinese cultures other than those laid out in the image of the Orientalist.

Yet, along with the proliferation of architectural signs of Chineseness, there is also a sense that these signs might provoke an unintended response. The city wants to show the importance of the Chinese in the social life of the nation, to give them a prominence they deserve. But there is also a fear that representing Chinese identity creates a dividing line between the ethnic Chinese and the Indonesians that, for many, was one of the very sources of the May riots.[50]

This proliferation of Chinese signs can be understood only in relation to the question of how Jakarta houses the memory of a people who no longer feel "at home" there. How can the city invite its ethnic Chinese citizens back into the nation after having alienated them during the riots? The nation tries to recognize the role the Chinese have played in the history and culture of the nation, yet the nation is also haunted by the possible absence of the Chinese economy. At the same time, from the state's perspective, the promotion of Chinese culture serves to redeem the violence done to the Chinese. The public declaration of Chinese culture is a by-product of the May riots, donated by the government as a gift to tranquilize, if not erase, the memories of the May riots themselves. For some Chinese Indonesians, the public performance of Chinese culture has, indeed, validated and affirmed a sense of cultural belonging. However, a sense of emptiness prevails in the recovering of Chinese culture, an impression that stems from the emptying out of Chinese culture from the context of its production: the violence of Suharto's time and the traumatic events of the May riots that most Chinese Indonesians are still

living through.[51] Yet, as a case of "repressive silencing," [52] this bypassing of "truth" has allowed the articulation of Chinese culture today.

For the Chinese Indonesian, the promotion of Chinese culture, like the appearance of the new architecture of Glodok, if not redemptive, nonetheless serves to overcome the overwhelming nature of the May riots. Avoiding the traumatic past as expressed through the playing out of Chinese culture and the building of amnesiac architecture on the sites of violence serves to neutralize the demands of trauma both to remember and to forget. In the face of violence and the threat against Chinese culture, the spectacle of Orientalist Chinese architecture might affirm a sense of Chineseness. Yet this type of architecture may also express the desire to forget the traumatized space and time by ways of reimagining the supposedly timeless cultures of the Chinese. It is out of this tangled web of forgetting and remembering memories of violence that the recent architecture in Jakarta and the concomitant discourses of Chinese cultures are produced.

The evasiveness of the state in dealing with the May riots, the nonexistence of any public memorial site, the appearance of an ostensibly Chinese culture and the construction of amnesiac postmodern architecture in Glodok are all connected. They do not directly communicate the forms of physical violence, but they tell us about the traumatized spaces and the temporal response to such spaces. These reimaginings of traumatized spaces through discourses of "repressive silencing" of violence increase our understanding of the *effects* of what happened, but they do not tell us what *really* happened in the event. They may increase our efforts to forget and to remember, but do they do justice to the extremity of the riots? What other mode of representation can do this?

JAKARTA IN THE STORY OF SENO GUMIRA AJIDARMA: THE FUTURE REMEMBERING OF THE PAST

If the spatial environment discussed so far bears no relation to the violent past, and the present provides no transcending ground to integrate knowledges and unify representations, perhaps a kind of future "history of the present" could provide us with a possibility of seeing the story and its political potential, even as its narrative provides no escapes from the here and now. It is most appropriate, then, to enter post-1998 Jakarta through a temporal narrative construction, regardless of how impossible it is to transcend the spatial environment of the everyday within which we are embedded.

Towards the end of 1999, an Indonesian writer, Seno Gumira Ajidarma, wrote a short essay entitled "Jakarta 2039" for the popular magazine *Matra*.[53] Eventually republished as an illustrated or graphic story, the essay as the

book itself declares, is "based on a true event told so that it will not happen again."[54] The novel *Jakarta 2039* can be read, like the architectural discourses portrayed above, in terms of the reconfiguration of time and space after the May riots. It differs from these reconfigurations, however, insofar as Seno makes gang rape a central component through which Indonesians of various backgrounds could reimagine the traumatized space by crossing time.

Jakarta 2039 is about the May riots as told "forty years and nine months later" by three people, each of a different generation. They have never known each other, but they are nevertheless connected and deeply shaped by the event that took place 40 years ago in the city where they are all living today (Figure 1.5).

The story is divided into three main sections, with each person telling a story about himself or herself and his or her own relationship to the event. Because each character is unacquainted with the others, it is only the reader who, having read all the stories, can comprehend the links between the individual experiences and imagine the story's coherence. In this sense, the story attempts to create an "imagined community" for the readers as residents of Jakarta who might be connected to (as well as divided from) one another by their private memories of what happened in May 1998.[55] The source of this imagining, however, is based not only on solidarity but on enmity as well.

The story opens with heavy rain in Jakarta and a police helicopter chasing two rapists who run across the jungle of skyscrapers and the poor urban neighbourhood of *kampung* in Jakarta (Figure 1.6).

Figure 1.5 The three sections of the story: "I turned out to be a child of rape"; "Where are you my child?"; "My child. Your father is a rapist" (Seno G. Ajidarma, *Jakarta 2039*, back cover).

DUA ORANG PENJAHAT BERLARI SIA-SIA DARI LORONG KE LORONG DALAM KEJARAN HELIKOPTER. ORANG-ORANG YANG TIDAK MERASA BERSALAH TENANG-TENANG SAJA DI SEPANJANG KAKI LIMA YANG RIUH.
LARI TERUS
TERUS LARI
MINGGIR LU!
ENAK AJA, MINGGIR?
TAKSI
4

Figure 1.6 "Keep running. The two criminals try to escape from the police helicopter. People on the street pay no attention to what is going on" (Ajidarma, *Jakarta 2039*, 4).

This scene has caught the attention of a woman at the window of her high-rise apartment. It triggers her to tell her story in front of her video camera. She tells how she traced her genealogy and discovered that she was born from a mass rape that took place more than 40 years earlier. She discovered her history only after incredible efforts because no file or written record existed. It was, finally, the elderly people of the city who told her of her history. Those who witnessed the event kept it secret, and no institutional memory was made for future generations. Nor is there any memorial to recall the event. There is also no attempt to turn private memories into a public history. The city kept the woman's secret, and perhaps the city in fact has no secret to keep. Rapes continue to take place, and the poor and rich keep living side by side but each occupying different worlds. Violence becomes what is lived. Its real-life spectacle registers no active relation with city's residents. There is hardly any response from people on the street as the two rapists are chased and caught by the police helicopter. The lack of reaction suggests that this is something people see every day. The city itself is a memorial to a violence that keeps reproducing itself.

If the city has no memory of violence since it continuously represents violence, then what the woman discovers of her past is something that is both shocking and overwhelming. She will never know her mother who hates her. And her father could be any man in the city. These have given her an enmity to her own past and to herself. It was only by chance that she learnt the truth, a truth that she perhaps does not want to know. "Today is my fortieth birthday, I feel I am reborn with a curse." The video camera keeps her story. This technology perhaps keeps the first document of the unrepresentable memory of the riots that she had never experienced. This deep memory cannot find proper storage in the public space; she has to keep the burden of knowing within herself. *Jakarta 2039* is the Jakarta of today. The story shows no change in Jakarta's cityscape and its social stratification. Policemen coexist with the rapists, high-rise buildings stand side by side with the *kampung* and the video recording joins with oral traditions. The normal pattern of the city's life continues alongside the hidden, broken and strained relationship between communities, between avoidance and engagement with the traumatic experience. There is no social action from which the future generation can remember and understand what had happened to ensure "that the past horror will never return."[56]

The second story opens with the police helicopter flying over the city. The bodies of the two rapists hang suspended, fastened to the helicopter at the end of a long rope. This flying object serves as a Foucauldian spectacle of punishment to the residents of the city to remind them of the rapists' fate. An elderly woman watches the scene from her high-rise apartment window. It prompts her to write in a diary that she keeps in her laptop computer:

> Today is the birthday of my daughter. If she is still alive, she is forty years old. Where are you my child? . . . Forty years have passed, I have *tried to forget* what has happened to me but the curse keeps following me. Why do people have to have memory? Even forgetfulness fails to erase the fact that I was raped, tortured, humiliated, and abandoned. I really hate that I was born and I really hate that you were born. I was raped at 10 p.m. on 14 May 1998 in a building on fire and where the screaming of other women could be heard.[57]

This woman, an Indonesian of Chinese descent, is perhaps the mother of the woman in the first story. Like the nation that finds it difficult to incorporate the rape into its history, the woman finds it hard to integrate the horrible event into her own life. Yet, unlike the nation, she is not able to forget the event and the child to whom she gave birth. The child is connected to the event. The mother knows perfectly well that she cannot keep the child who would remind her of what she seeks to forget. She has tried every way to forget .Yet within this commitment to forget, the mother remembers and still retains an ambiguous wish to see the child – the aftereffect of gang rape. This is perhaps the significance of the May riots. Unlike the previous riots, rape entails follow-up stories that cannot be contained in the past. The mother decides to stay in the city where she was gang raped in order to reimagine the traumatized space as a space for possible reconciliation with her child, though she hopes that the child "will never know who she is."[58] Unlike those who see trauma as irreparable within the traumatized space of the nation, the mother stays, like the ethnic Chinese at Glodok, in order to reimagine it anew. This second story asks: How do we deal with the effect of a trauma that demands representation yet refuses to be represented?[59]

The third story again begins with the police helicopter swinging the two bodies of the rapists from the rope, but now they hang right over the poor *kampung* neighbourhood of Jakarta. The light of the helicopter illuminates the darkness of the area and brings down the shadow of the hanging rapists onto the thatched roofs of the shantytown. The next panel brings the reader to a house in a poor *kampung*. A young girl brings a glass of water to her dying father lying on the bed. She sees her father as a hard-working man who, in his relatively young age, looks old and seems to "carry with him a burden as heavy as a globe on his back."[60] Everyone has decided to leave him, except her. That night her father asks her to stay at his bedside because he wants to tell her a secret he has been keeping for a long time. Closing her eyes the girl hears the story of the May riots that took place more than 40 years ago in the city where they are living today. She hears the story of the looting, the burning and the raping of many young girls, each by 9–12 people. She pictures her young father, smoking a cigarette, calmly walking through the ruins until he spots a young girl crying and hiding alone at the corner of a destroyed

building. Her father throws the cigarette away and, with eyes opened wide, approaches the girl and drags her to another corner and rapes her. His actions attract a crowd of people who then repeat the violation of the girl. Her father then lights a cigarette and calmly walks away without looking back. The old father ends the story with a note: "13 and 14 May, 1998, *they* write it down in history."

The young girl, hearing all this, pulls herself away from her father. She indeed remembers what her teacher told her (seemingly not from a textbook) in history class: "The riots on 13 and 14 May are the most humiliating event in the nation's history. Many women were gang raped because they were ethnic Chinese."[61] Quietly turning her back to her father, she says: "How could father do that kind of thing? Father has mommy, auntie, and now a daughter. I am also a woman, father. I feel the suffering of that woman. Father, I am so disappointed. How did this happen?"[62] "I don't know. Everyone was insane. Everyone did it. We felt that we were being led. None of us know how this happened. We have never talked about it. I have never wanted to meet those men again. When we met, we have never talked about it. We do not want to remember it."[63]

We can read Seno's story through an optic of pessimism and horror in the sense that everyone is involved in the making of the May riots, but there is no channel to unmake the event. Yet we should also ask how the memories of the woman in the first story connect to those of the second and the third. And what are the political implications of this connection with regard to the broader position of women in Indonesia? These three stories represent the ways in which the identities of these women have been permanently marked by the traumatic event. The three women depicted in the story, each representing a generation, recognized themselves through traces that go beyond class and ethnic identification. As the young girl in the last story indicates, "You have hurt me, father. That woman will never forget the event. Father will also never be able to redeem the sense of guilt. And now I have to live with this wound too, forever. If that woman had a child from the rape, she will be forty years old today. I have a sister somewhere."[64]

Seno uses his story to show that the basic feature of consciousness stems from a sense of connectedness to the extreme event that has been suppressed by the state and its citizens. His narrative integrates the voices of the victims and, through them, constructs a national community. What Seno raises in his story is not merely the *effect* of the event on the social and political consciousness of the city's residents, but whether it triggers the "collective" consciousness of city dwellers who have been numbed by the apparent commonplace of violence, rape and poverty.

On the other hand, the insertion of the extreme event of the past into the present and the future contradicts the concept of development in the nation's

history. Consistent with the erasure of history (by the state), Seno's story provides no historical context as to how and why the May riots happened. In this sense, his story might also be easily incorporated into the state's denial of the gang rapes of ethnic Chinese women because it presents the event as one produced through "oral tradition" and an illustrative "comic novel" *without* any firm evidence. Nevertheless, through the story Seno engages the demand for a representation of the event. The story does not pretend to be adequate but teases out the repressed part of Indonesian history. In the narrative, the recollection has been blocked for decades by the state, which finds it difficult to domesticate the most extreme components of May riots into its official history. Yet, this extreme past returns in the form of private narratives, passed on to new generations by the elderly who, though they have not forgotten the events, have preferred to suppress them.[65] The younger generations, in turn, continues to carry the burden of these memories, keeping them off official records and confined to personal narratives and recording devices. The present and the future are continuously haunted by a past that is registered, not in any monument, but in the minds of the people.

AFTERMATH

As I passed through West and North Jakarta, an area where the riots took place, I saw ruins of burnt or damaged buildings have not been fully cleaned up. The fire-blackened walls of many ravaged shophouses and damaged homes that were plundered and set on fire are still evident. There are innumerable broken windows that have been covered over. Renovated buildings close to my neighbourhood exhibit different facades. If, in the past, buildings were curtained with glass walls, they are now made of concrete with very small windows. Where glass walls exist, they are fully caged over by iron grids. These façades are part of the features used to counter the effects of rioting, but they are also ghostly objects that instigate fear and memories of violence. Some people still use damaged buildings, ignoring the gaping holes. Signs of deep social and psychological wounds that have yet to heal, these holes attract attention of passers-by only to return their gazes with a reminder of riots that might occur again.

High, sharp-pointed fences are now the main features of Jakarta's cityscape. These symbols of middle-class prestige were there before, but in the context of post–May 1998 violence the fences somehow appear different. They no longer seem to connote power. They do not have any real power to exclude. Rather, these enclosures signify defence, fear and abandonment. They keep things inside, including the sense of personal wonder, trauma and anguish. As many Chinese Indonesians have not yet been able to bring their trauma into

Figure 1.7 Ruins between new construction in Northwest Jakarta (courtesy of the author).

the public light, some have given up their efforts to become "Indonesian." One can see from the street that houses are left empty and damaged. Perhaps the owners cannot afford to renovate their destroyed houses or shops, but some do not even want to recognize them as their own. For them, the trauma of the May 1998 riots cannot be cured within the space of the nation. As we have seen, these spaces bear no relation to the horrors that have taken place; they have instead been made into dehistoricized spaces of exchange such as the modern mall or theme park. Like the cityscape of Jakarta, these spaces speak the silent language of the victims of the gang rapes. The silence as invoked by these buildings, as much as powerful as a voice, opens up the possibility for an acknowledgement of the difficulties entailed in representing the gang rapes.

This brings us back to the question asked of President Habibie by the Chinese at Glodok: "But how are we going to deal with trauma . . . how to build up a new image … with an Indonesian spirit?" If trauma can be cured "with an Indonesian spirit" (supposedly then, within the space of the nation), perhaps it would involve not only the government, but also the nation's communities that both raped and allowed the rapes to occur, to feel responsible for and *to act* on such memory. In the end, the "new image" imagined by the Chinese at Glodok may not be a single settled image at all – but simply a

never-to-be resolved struggle over trauma that supposedly must be, or even can be, overcome.

Jakarta 2039, the modernist architecture of Glodok Plaza, the postmodern expression of Pasar Glodok and other buildings that have taken up Chinese identity, and the ruins of the cityscape are all part of this unresolved struggle. Not unlike the victims of the gang rapes, they have tried (in every way) to forget, even as they acknowledge the difficulty of forgetting. They speak, even as their voices cannot be illustrated through *kata-kata* (words). They speak, through the everyday environment, to a general need for a sense of the Chinese Indonesian experiences of violence, the difficulties entailed in representing those experiences and the complex mediations to overcome them through unspoken desires for justice, forgiveness and relief.

NOTES

1. One estimation suggests that more than two thousand people were killed in the riots. The victims of rape are calculated to be somewhere between 168 and 468 people (of whom 20–60 died). See Colombijn, 'What is so Indonesian about Violence?,' 34. For a report, list of documents, and discussion of the riots in Indonesia, see Pattiradjawane, 'Peristiwa Mei 1998 di Jakarta: Titik Terendah Sejarah Orang Etnis Cina di Indonesia.'

2. For a discussion of the causes of the May riots and the pattern of anti-Chinese riots in Indonesia in the late Suharto period, see Sidel, "Macet Total"; for a discussion on Indonesians (including ethnic Chinese) perception of the May riots, see Siegel, "Thoughts on the Violence," and Siegel, "Early Thoughts on the Violence."

3. For a discussion on anti-Chinese activities in the formation of Indonesian nationalism in the early twentieth century, see Shiraishi, "Anti-Sinicism in Java's New Order." For a report on the killing of Chinese at the outbreak of Indonesian revolution in Malang, see Kwee Thiam Tjing, *Indonesia Dalem Api dan Bara*. On the massacre of Chinese during the beginning of Dutch colonial rule, see Blusse, "Batavia, 1619–1740."

4. Siegel suggests that anti-Chinese riots in Indonesia have taken the form of looting goods, burning houses and properties, killing those identified on the spot as Chinese, as if the word *Chinese* itself legitimizes the practices of theft and violence. As Benedict Anderson has stated in relation to Siegel's work on the peculiarity of the ethnic Chinese position, "Few Indonesians dream of wiping them out or of expelling them wholesale from the country." On the contrary, believing that "Chinese have unlimited access to goods . . . looters who ransacked small Chinese neighborhood stores allowed themselves to feel surprised and even annoyed when they discovered that the stores had not reopened for business the following week." Anderson, "Introduction," in *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia,* 15.

5. Gang rape, as a technique of subjugation, was first exercised in parts of Aceh and East Timor by elements of Indonesian military under Suharto's regime. The rape

of Sino-Indonesian women has been attributed – though without proof – to these elements of Suharto's security apparatus. It appears, however, that non-military Indonesians of lower classes also participated in the rape. For a discussion of Indonesians' perceptions of the May gang rape, including the reception and denial of these aspects of the riots, see Siegel, "Thoughts on the Violence"; and Siegel, "Early Thoughts on the Violence." See also: Strassler, "Gendered Visibilities and the Dream of Transparancy" and Heryanto, "Rape, Race and Reporting."

6. Siegel, "Thoughts on the Violence," 111.

7. Ibid., 109.

8. Groups of Indonesians of ethnic Chinese descent have demanded that the government acknowledge the gang rape of ethnic Chinese girls and women during the May riots. For a report of the protest in front of the Presidential Palace during the rule of Abdurrahman Wahid, see "Keturunan Tionghoa Berdemo di Istana Negara," 10, 54. I would like to mention that there have been dishonesties concerning the fact of gang rapes and in the circulation of the voices of the victims of the gang rapes through internet. The most troubling one has been the circulation of gruesome pictures of mutilated bodies of women. These pictures were taken from the violence in East Timor. They were, however, used by the mobs and the Chinese community, mostly overseas, to represent the gang rapes of the May riots and to gain the attention of the public. For a discussion and a list of references on the denial that gang rapes occurred during the riots, see Pattiradjawane, "Peristiwa Mei 1998," 239–47.

9. "Habibie Temui Pedagang."

10. "Trauma Mematikan dan Membangkitkan," The victims of May riots, especially of the gang rapes, often do not want to speak about the event.

11. See, among others, Gillis, ed. *Commemorations*; Wu Hung, "Tiananmen Square"; Mitchell (ed.), *Art and the Public Sphere*; James Young, *At Memory's Edge*.

12. According to Walter Benjamin: "Architecture has always represented the prototype of a work of art the reception of which is consummated by a collectivity in a state of distraction." See Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 239. Scholars of visual cultures have often overlooked the significance of space in Benjamin's work. For Benjamin, the distractive aspect of architecture and space is crucial to the formation of mass (absentminded) subjects. For a recent assessment of the spatial components in the works of Benjamin, see Vidler, *Warped Space,* 80–96.

13. "Habibie Temui Pedagang."

14. The importance of this image of Glodok is re-emphasized by the economic team of former president Abdurrahman Wahid (2000–2001). "The (economic) impact (of riots) is very big. The world will blow out the news if there is an incident (of riot) in Glodok. Investors in Singapore are afraid to come, not to mention investors from other parts of the world." See "Investorpun takut."

15. "Habibie Temui Pedagang."

16. Ibid.

17. See Siegel, "Early Thoughts on the Violence," 96 n. 13.

18. Wang Gungwu, a historian of ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia, has pointed out that the ethnic Chinese with whom he has spoken have been unable to express the specificity of the violence during the May riots, as gang rapes have dwelled silently

and uncomfortably in the existing stock of arson, looting and other anti-Chinese actions in Indonesia (Communication with Wang Gungwu in Singapore, July 10, 2002).

19. Berfield, Susan and Dewi Loveard, "Ten Days That Shook Indonesia," 38.

20. "Warga Tionghoa Peringati Tragedi Mei."

21. A building construction journal opened its report on the rebuilding of Glodok Plaza in this way: "The May riots still leaves traces in our memories. The residues of the riots can still be found today, for many building owners are still waiting for a safer environment. However, lately, there has been many rebuilding of public buildings that were destroyed during the riots. One of these is the shopping mall of Glodok Plaza." "Renovasi Glodok Plaza Menerapkan Konsep 'IT Mall.'"

22. "Glodok Plaza si Legendaris."

23. "Image Baru Glodok Plaza."

24. Ibid.

25. "Renovasi Glodok Plaza Menerapkan Konsep 'IT-Mall.'"

26. "Image Baru Glodok Plaza."

27. "Glodok Plaza to reopen in July 2001."

28. "Surya Semesta Internusa will boost efficiency by internal merger."

29. "Glodok Plaza si Legendaris."

30. According to one report, the decision to completely clean the site of the remnants of riots was based on a Chinese belief that fire connotes a bad omen. See "Dianggap tidak 'hoki.'"

31. In the map of the municipality, "Glodok" is part of old Batavia. The municipality of Jakarta has for some time intended to turn the old part of Jakarta into a heritage town for nostalgic tourism. If the project is successful, tourists will be able to "explore the old city . . . with the taste of old time. Keroncong music [a popular Hawaiian-like songs of the colonial time, quite often performed by a troop of musicians from various ethnic backgrounds: indigenous, Eurasian, Chinese] will accompany the tourists to walk and enjoy old buildings, which might have been turned into theaters, hotels, plazas, cafes, museums and souvenir shops." See Muchtar, "Bangunan Kuno, Jakarta dan Pariwisata." See also Ginting, "Bernostalgia di Hotel Omni Batavia."

32. "Pancoran akan Menjadi Kawasan Pejalan Kaki."

33. Ibid.

34. "Habibie Temui Pedagang."

35. "Doa, Tabur Bunga, dan Orasi Warnai Peringatan Tragedi Mei."

36. As Michel de Certeau remarks, "Any autonomous order is founded upon what it eliminates: it produces a 'residue' condemned to be forgotten. But what was excluded re-infiltrates the place of its origin – now the present's 'clean' place." De Certeau, *Heterologies,* 4.

37. For a history of the Chinese mayors in colonial Indonesia, see Lohanda, *The Kapitan Cina in Batavia 1837–1942*.

38. See Khouw, "Candra Naya Escapes Wrecker's Ball." Several seminars involving not only academicians but also government representatives, businesspeople and the developers of the site have been staged to discuss Candra Naya. I had the chance to participate in a closed meeting with the owners of the Modern Land (a big business

group, the owners of which include Chinese Indonesian businessmen), architectural preservation experts, and the *fengshui* master, who also is a spirit medium, on July 19, 2001.

39. The spirit medium conversed with Khouw Kui Lan, the spirit of the daughter of the last Chinese major in Batavia. Lady Khouw does not want to give way to the skyscrapers. She says that if her house is to be moved, it should be relocated to the site of the previous Chinese embassy in Indonesia (on land that was owned by her father) or the house should "move upward" along its vertical axis. This latter alternative suggests a means for Lady Khouw to take on the skyscrapers. If the owners do not follow her wish, disasters beyond imagination will occur and she will also ask Nyi Loro Kidul (the legendary queen of the South Seas) to deal with the problem. This story worries the owners even though they are Christians. On September 11, 2001, the youngest son of the owners of the skyscrapers was killed in one of the planes that crashed into the World Trade Center in New York City. Stories have been circulated among those who believed in the story of Lady Khouw that the death of the son is connected to the owners' disrespect of Candra Naya. The most recent news concerning the fate of Candra Naya is that it stays, and the property developers of the skyscrapers are trying to "integrate" Candra Naya into the new high-rise complex.

40. For the activity of Sin Ming Hui, see Oei Tjoe Tat, *Memoar Oei Tjoe Tat*, chap. 5.

41. Also noted in the case of Candra Naya are the differences in social class among the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. The owners of the skyscrapers represent big Chinese Indonesian investors, and they do not have to be physically on the site where their business is located. These ungrounded business deals are very different from the locally bound Chinese at Glodok who, speaking neither Chinese nor English, must deal with customers, former rioters among them, on a daily basis. For discussions on Chinese diaspora and transnationalism, see Aihwa Ong, "On the Edge of Empires"; Aihwa Ong and Donald Nonini, eds., *Ungrounded Empires*.

42. On the postmodern, see Hal Foster, "Postmodernism: A Preface."; Heryanto, "What Does Postmodernism Do in Contemporary Indonesia?" Andreas Huyssen would perhaps identify this phenomenon as a "geographical spread of the culture of memory" against amnesia and "the loss of historical consciousness" of "lived memories" the expression of which "remains ties to the histories of specific nations and states." See Huyssen, "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia," 26–27.

43. Huyssen, "Present Pasts," 26.

44. "Imlek di Klenteng Meriah, Pertokoan Sepi."

45. *Barongsai* is usually performed in the temple and on the streets during Chinese New Year, religious rites or public celebrations. Accompanied by drums beating, it attracted crowds (of Chinese and non-Chinese backgrounds). This carnival-like performance was banned under the instruction of President Suharto. The banning of this performance signified the erasure of Chinese cultures in public. Its return is significant in a sense that it has become a symbol of the change of political order. *Barongsai* can be seen in many places today, especially shopping malls and tourist areas. For a report on the mushrooming of traditional Chinese art and culture after 1998, see

Kleden, Hermien and Adi Sutarwiyo, "The Lionheart Beats Again." Kleden, et al., "The Lion Roars Once More"; "Mal-Mal Bersaing Gelar Barongsai."

46. For a reaction from the state as well as from communities in the capital city on Chinese New Year in Glodok, see "Kawasan Glodok Semarak Sambut Imlek"; "Imlek Datangkan Rezeki di Glodok"; "Perayaan Imlek dijaga ketat 30,000 Anggota Satgas."

47. For a documentation and discussion of the process of banning signs of Chinese cultures in Indonesia, see Coppel, *The Indonesian Chinese in Crisis.*

48. For a discussion on the proliferation of Chinese language newspapers in the post-1998 major urban centres of Indonesia, see Sudibyo, "Pers Tionghoa, Sensibilitas Budaya, dan Pamali Politik"; Anam, Saiful and Ningrum Palupi, "Haiya, Ada Ribao."

49. *Kota Wisata* belongs to the business group of *Duta Pertiwi* which joins venture with business groups from Japan, Korea and Thailand. Starting in 1996, it sought to promote housing for upper middle income consumers. Located at the outskirt of Jakarta, it aims to feature architectural styles of various countries. See the website of *Kota Wisata* at www.spot.net/ktwisata/profile.htm *Kota Wisata* began to promote Chinese architecture in 2001, a decision many believe would have been impossible to make during the reign of Suharto.

50. According to one Indonesian Chinese, "People have begun to try to revive Chinese culture, although they still worry about the uncertain political circumstances." See: "Imlek: Mengulang Tradisi Masa Lalu."

51. The present memory of Chinese cultures is therefore "another form of forgetting, and forgetting a form of hidden memory," Huyssen, "Present Pasts," 27.

52. Huyssen, "Present Pasts," 26.

53. Seno Gumira Ajidarma, "Jakarta, 14 Februari 2039," *Matra* (December 1999). The essay is reprinted with illustrations by Asnar Zacky and retitled *Jakarta 2039* (Yogyakarta: Galang, 2001). Citations in the following discussion are from the illustrated version. Seno's story is about the May riots, but it does not include the non-Chinese Indonesian middle class. That the essay was published in *Matra* requires comment. The main readers of *Matra* are middle-class Indonesians who were spared the extreme effects of the riots. Thus, in spite of the sacrifice of middle-class university students in the riots, this social group is likely the least critical of the May 1998 anti-Chinese riots. Perhaps this is the way Seno encourages the middle class to critically reflect on the violence. For an insightful commentary on the "mentality" of non-Chinese Indonesian middle class during the May riots, see Siegel, "Early Thoughts on the Violence."

54. See the back cover of *Jakarta 2039*. For a discussion on the denial of the occurrence of gang rapes, see Siegel, "Early Thoughts on the Violence." Seno's story, in this sense, could be seen as producing a discourse about rapes, as Siegel (ibid., n. 31) puts it, "an actual event put into a framework suitable for the (news)papers and for the elaboration of stories."

55. For a discussion of the concept of simultaneity in the novel and its political effect for the formation of new consciousness, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, chap. 2.

56. Seno, *Jakarta 2039*, back cover.

57. Ibid., 30–37 (emphasis added).
58. Ibid., 48–49.
59. Michael Roth and Charles Salas write: "The modern concept of trauma emphasizes the demand for representation and the refusal to be represented." See Roth, Michael and Charles Salas, "Introduction" in *Disturbing Remains*, 2.
60. Seno, *Jakarta 2039*, 57.
61. Ibid., 72.
62. Ibid., 69.
63. Ibid., 70.
64. Ibid., 72.
65. In the last scene of Seno's story, the policeman, after making his own decision to spare the lives of the two rapists, explained to his partner: "I am actually a son of a rapist. I accidentally *overheard* a conversation between my caretaker at the orphanage and a reporter. My caretaker said to the reporter that what he was about to hear should *off the record.* But I recorded it in my mind. My mother was raped by my father at the night of looting and burning on 14 May 1998. I was born nine months later on 14 February 1999. I am forty years old now. I don't know who my mother and my father are. I live with anger to rapists. In my mind, I have already killed my father. I don't know which one is more evil and wrong, to kill a rapist or to kill my own father." Seno, *Jakarta 2039*, 77–78 (emphasis added).

Chapter 2

The Shophouse

Few days after the May 1998 riots in Jakarta, Sutiyoso, the governor of Jakarta, reported that the material loss of the city had amounted to Rp. 2.5 Trilyun. The two days of riots had destroyed "13 markets, 2,470 ruko (shophouses), 40 malls, 1,604 shops, 45 auto repair shops, 2 districts (kecamatan), 11 police stations, 282 private offices, 65 banks, 24 restaurants, 12 hotels, 9 gas stations, 8 city buses and metromini, 1,119 cars, 821 motorcycles, 486 traffic lights, 11 parks, 18 fences, 1,026 houses and a church."[1] Since the riots were largely aimed at the ethnic Chinese, and *ruko* (shophouse) is a an artifact tied to the history of ethnic Chinese, this chapter tells a history of *ruko*.

Referred to as a "ruko" (an abbreviation of *rumah-toko* or "house-shop"), the Indonesian shophouse is a vernacular architectural building type commonly seen in urban South East Asia and predominately associated with ethnic Chinese settlers in the region (Figure 2.1).[2] Typically it consists of a shop on the ground floor, which opens up at the front to a public arcade known as a "five-foot way" (*kaki lima*) and has residential accommodation upstairs. There is also a small inner courtyard that serves as a skywell bringing air and light into the interior space. While the architectural style of the *ruko* has changed over time, most *ruko* have retained the same floor plan over generations and thereby sustained an identifiable building typology.[3]

The *ruko* is perceived as a historical artefact in other parts of South East Asia, notably in Singapore where it has been conserved (after large-scale destruction) as part of the national heritage and tourist industry.[4] However, in the Indonesian architectural establishment, the *ruko* has not been treated as an important building type. Instead, as this chapter shows, it is more often viewed as a source of agony and a building form that lacks the entitlement

Figure 2.1 The old *ruko* in the Glodok area of contemporary Jakarta (courtesy of the author).

to be included under the rubric of "heritage." It is a building type that both masks and discloses the unsettling history of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia.

The dominant forces in society prefer to consider the *ruko* as a renewed space in the economy rather than any part of the national heritage or culture, as indicated by a cursory look at some mainstream magazines aimed at local entrepreneurs of the 1980s, when the *ruko* was experiencing phenomenal growth. Article titles such as "Ruko: Primadona Baru Properti" (*Ruko*: The New Prima Donna of the Property Market) and "Rumah-Toko: Alternative di Tengah Koreksi Pasar" (*Ruko*: An alternative choice for market recovery) reveal the importance of this type of building in the property business of Indonesia.[5] However, the growth of the *ruko* slowed down and declined in the wake of the May 1998 riots against the ethnic Chinese, which included much destructive violence on Chinese-identified built spaces, such as the *ruko*. The riots, generated by elements in the military, who exploited grassroots anti-Chinese sentiments, led to psychological as well as physical damage (see chapter 1). It took a few years after the riots for the *ruko* to re-emerge on the property market.

In 2006, for instance, *Properti Indonesia,* a real estate magazine, featured a special issue titled *Ruko Terus Diburu*/*Continuing the Hunt for the Ruko* that promoted the potential of this building type for business investment.[6] Since

then, there have been many descriptive accounts on the *ruko* as a precursor to economic growth in a changing Indonesia. The return is not modest. Observers use words such as "flooding" and "epidemic" to describe the phenomenal resurgence of the *ruko*. For instance, in a research paper published by a university in Jakarta, the author Christine Wahyuasih points out:

> Today the *ruko* has achieved epidemic proportions in the major cities of Indonesia. It wouldn't be an issue if the spread of the *ruko* was confined to a particular territory. Trouble begins when many unplanned *ruko* spread uncontrollably to various areas. This has caused traffic jams, a decline of public safety, an increase of garbage and the degradation of the visual environment.[7]

The report further indicates that the *ruko* has lost its character as its owners "modernize its appearance with no regard to its earlier typology. Furthermore, the *ruko* are getting higher and continue to stage more and more billboards."[8]

This chapter shows how the *ruko*, in its various expressions and transformations over time, engages in the history, culture and politics of thriving urban environments in Indonesia. It also reveals how the identity of the *ruko* does not depend on its architectural characteristics or its building typology. Instead the *ruko* owes its identity to the circulation of ideology, common perceptions and a social and political consensus. In other words, the *ruko* can be associated with ethnic Chinese identity only if such an association is sufficiently circulated and accepted in the media and public imagination.

The *ruko* is therefore discussed here as a building type situated within a dynamic sociopolitical context rather than in terms of its stylistic and functional dimensions.[9] The focus is on the contextually defined meaning and practices that in turn help to create and sustain the accepted building type. I integrate discursive sources of data and field observations to create a diachronic account for the continuity and change over time of the meaning of the *ruko*. What emerges is neither objective nor complete. Instead it remains open ended, subjective and even speculative. This interpretative account seeks to emphasize the irreducibility of meaning-making and highlights the unlimited layers of interpretations that one could offer on the formation and transformation of the *ruko*. This chapter thus is divided into several layers of evocations with the objective of showing, first, how a building type and socially constructed set of ideas mutually constitute each other; and how different expressions of and responses to the *ruko* have produced ethnic Chinese identity in Indonesia. Second, how this relation between architecture and identity is up for renegotiation prompted by the appearance of new forms of *ruko* and new political circumstances and demands.

A few caveats are in order. First, although, the *ruko* belongs to a transnational regional type of shophouses that can be found in various part, of South

East Asia, I focus solely on Indonesia as the political cultures in that country offer a complex case to address the life cycle of the type. Second, to reveal the general contour that gives the *ruko* its distinct identity, I assemble together different materials from various cities even though each of the cases I address has its own specific sociopolitical context. I mobilize and organize them diachronically, following the materials at hand, with the risk of generalization, in order to constitute a "national" memory of the Indonesian shophouse. Third, I use the term *ruko* instead of shophouse to give a local flavour to this regional building type even though the notion of the *ruko* only became popular in the 1980s when it was more fully integrated into the activities of the large-scale property industry and markets in Indonesia. Finally, I show how the ethnic Chinese are conceived rather narrowly as an economic entity via their association with the *ruko*, even though the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, like any other ethnic group, are a diverse population. In the words of the Indonesian sociologist, Arif Budiman, "There are many kinds of Chinese: rich, poor, business tycoons, workers, small traders, and unemployed. Some Chinese make money and become rich; some others remain poor, discriminated against, and exploited."[10] One can also add that not all ethnic Chinese live in *ruko* or can be associated with them.

THE CHINESE LAYER

In a relatively recent anonymous website posting, an Indonesian writes,

> If we look at the buildings along the streets of Indonesian cities, we will see a row of *ruko*. All kinds of businesses can be conducted by the owners who live there, such as groceries, building materials, restaurants, computer shops, etc. What is particularly interesting for us is that the majority of the people who use or own *ruko* are ethnic Chinese ("*orang Cina*").[11]

The author then asks, "Why do Chinese people prefer to live in a *ruko*?," to which he offers this answer:

> It appears that for Chinese people who are starting their own business, they will do everything to buy a *ruko*, but for what? The *ruko* is not only a place for living and doing business, but it is also for investment. How smart they are! While staying in the *ruko*, they accumulate capital until they have enough to buy a house.[12]

The author of this blog post identifies as non-Chinese and expresses an assumption that the diverse ethnic Chinese community is interested only in economic exchange and prosperity. The author represents Indonesians'

widespread curiosity about ethnic Chinese business culture, which members of the Indonesian middle class have increasingly sought to emulate. What is of particular interest to us is the connection the author makes between the success of the ethnic Chinese and their *ruko*.

The connection between the *ruko* and the ethnic Chinese business identity has long been established, and is sustained by real estate developers who are predominantly ethnic Chinese (see chapter 7). For instance, Ikawan, a developer, indicates that in the city of Palembang, South Sumatra, where he worked, "the economic players are largely Chinese (*orang Tionghoa*) who believe that if they have four children, they must buy four *ruko*. That is why I feel sure that if I build a *ruko*, there is always a buyer."[13] Here, the *ruko* is tied to the Fujianese notion of "*hoki*" (good luck), which in turn is linked to the reproduction of children. Because most ethnic Chinese have Fujianese roots, the *ruko* and children are perceived as products and sources of economic prosperity, the value of which can be kept and bestowed, by way of inheritance, on the next generation.

Jongki Wardiman, the architect of Adgraph Studio in Jakarta, who is in charge of building *ruko* in several places in the Riau Islands, tells a similar story, linking the *ruko* to Chinese subjectivity. He notes that the cities of Pekanbaru, Tanjung Pinang and Batam have already been flooded with *ruko* and he attributes this extraordinary expansion to the rapid economic growth in the region. As a builder, Wardiman knows his clients well. He remarks that "almost all the owners of *ruko* in Riau are ethnic Chinese who open shops. They are the *ruko*'s fans."[14] He characterizes his *ruko* clients as

> simple-minded people who don't care about architectural and aesthetic considerations. They dislike trees around their *ruko*, and prefer to wall themselves off from the surroundings by adding an extra storey away from the street. They also prefer small windows. Yet they favour eye-catching colours to draw attention. . . . In short they think only economically of how to generate capital from the *ruko*.[15]

Wardiman also notes that the contemporary *ruko* rises to four stories high, some with an additional penthouse designed to attract swallows to nest. He considers the proliferation of the *ruko* in the Riau Islands as part of the general pattern of its development in other Indonesian cities (Figure 2.2).

Wardiman's observation reminds me of the story shared by Hendro Gondokusumo, a major ethnic Chinese developer who operates in Jakarta today. Gondokusumo recalls how difficult it was in the mid-1970s to sell suburban houses to ethnic Chinese who had been living in the *ruko* of Glodok (the old Chinatown of Jakarta constructed during colonial times). The young Gondokusumo then wanted to "modernize" the ethnic Chinese by moving

Figure 2.2 Elevated *ruko* in Jakarta, 2010 (courtesy of the author).

them away from their old *ruko* in Chinatown to a "proper" housing estate. Gondokusumo recalls that "it was very difficult to sell houses then (*susah banget*)! They [the ethnic Chinese in Glodok] only want to live in *ruko*, so that if someone wants to buy something at midnight, they could open their doors."[16] Gondokusumo finally sold off his first housing project to buyers in Glodok after extraordinary efforts of persuasion.

It is important to understand that the *ruko*'s classification as an index of economic prosperity and the economic presence of Chinese in an area is a construct that draws on both myth and direct observation. All the commentaries above, by an ordinary anonymous Indonesian, an architect and a developer, represent the dominant perception in society, one that associates Chineseness with the *ruko*, but also ignores the realities that the owners of the *ruko* are by no means only ethnic Chinese. Moreover, it is not always possible to figure out the ethnicity of this particular building type, despite the commentaries above perpetuating the well-established stereotype that associates the *ruko* with the economically savvy Chinese. The disregard that the owners of the *ruko* hold for the aesthetics of the townscape and harmony of urban design is thus attributed to the economic priorities that ethnic Chinese are assumed to have. But, on the other hand, the general absence of

urban planning regulations and lack of law enforcement in many Indonesian cities with regard to building height, infrastructure and environmental considerations are legitimate factors that are not considered responsible for the unregulated growth of the *ruko*. In short, the moral economy of the *ruko* and the evocation of the position of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia are seen to be at odds with national culture and urban planning norms.

A LAYER OF OVERSEAS CHINESE HISTORY

The morpho-typology of the *ruko* in Indonesia has been relatively well studied and speculated upon, but the origins of this particular type of building remain obscure and scholars debate whether the first Chinese settlement in Indonesia took the form of *ruko*. Some refer to its evolution in relation to accelerated urbanization in the nineteenth century, others believe it to be older. Architectural historian Johannes Widodo indicates that in Pelabuhan Deli near Medan, North Sumatra, one can find traces of an original Chinese settlement (probably established in the nineteenth century) that included examples of *ruko* with Chinese roofs.[17] The Chinese origin of the *ruko* has also been emphasized by architectural historian Handinoto who (following the study of David Kohl) notes that *ruko* can be found in the coastal provinces of Guandong and Fujian in China.[18] Chinese migrants were believed to have brought the idea of the *ruko* to their "Chinese quarters" in South East Asia.

The studies above indicate that *ruko* originated from the southern coast of China and then travelled to the region by way of cultural diffusion following the migration of early Chinese pioneers. The later development of this form of building is also linked to the phenomenon of socio-spatial segregation in the colonial city. Under the Dutch colonial discourse of race, ethnic enclaves were a feature of the urban fabric, and the ethnic Chinese would occupy separate districts, governed by their own mayors and cultural norms.[19] This policy of socio-spatial segregation in the colonial city consolidated the "Chinese districts" and, therefore, territorialized the *ruko*. By the nineteenth century, the *ruko* had become an emblematic architecture associated with the diverse Chinese population of the region.

The social life of the colony, however, was more fluid and porous than a single ethnic association might suggest. There were inter-group contacts and interchanges of ideas between different communities that enhanced the urban fabric as expressed in an architectural morphology of segregation.[20] The architectural expressions of the *ruko* incorporated building elements from Dutch, Indian, Arab, Javanese and Malay architectures, among others. Such a tradition of intercultural interaction, which went back to the pre-colonial era,

has served to localize *ruko* in various ways. For instance, one still can find today devotions to "Datuk Kong" (the local guardian spirit of the land) at the front entrance and rear of *ruko*. The presence of this deity shows that local religious practices permeated the seemingly foreign *ruko*. Adopting local cultural practices and appropriating fashionable styles according to the spirit of the age, the *ruko* has survived different sociopolitical milieus. The mutation of the architectural space and form of *ruko* thus stems from sociopolitical contexts within which the *ruko* is embedded. The "evolution" of *ruko* from one to two or more floors is a case in point.

Most studies on the architecture of this building type indicate that the emergence of the two-storey *ruko* was largely an anonymous process of urban transformation that stemmed from the quick pace of urbanization, increased population density and the scarcity of land. However, we could also consider the history of violence against ethnic Chinese as providing the basis for the adoption of an elevated structure. In his study of Indies houses, historian Rudolf Mrazek points out that the two-storey house (favoured by the Dutch) in colonial Indonesia may have originated in Chinese communities who elevated their house as a safety measure against external threats. Mrazek sees "the living quarters with a built-up (imagined) safety off the ground" as a response to the "ever unpredictable and as often as not, anti-Chinese Indies environment."[21]

The introduction of modern town planning in the 1930s by renowned Dutch planner Thomas Karsten affected some well-off Chinese who decided to move out of the ethnic enclave to live in the "white suburb," but this did not do much to change the building and social traditions of the *ruko*. The *ruko* of the Chinese continued to be marked by mixed use with families working downstairs and living upstairs, off the ground, thus enacting the bipolar identity of ethnic Chinese as commercial bourgeoisies (who engaged with the economy of the street) and racial minorities (living above ground as refugees from anti-Chinese violence).[22]

The uniformity of *ruko* nevertheless has given way to a markedly variegated built fabric more recently. The *ruko* of businessman Oei Tiong Ham, for instance, was upgraded in the 1930s into an art deco style building, a fashion widely deployed for *ruko* in the late colonial era.[23] Art deco *ruko* constituted a feature of what Liem Thian Joe, a journalist of Semarang in Central Java, called "*moderen*" buildings in 1993.[24] By the 1980s, many of these late colonial art deco *ruko* were in a state of ruin or being demolished, replaced by a new form of *ruko* covered with billboards.[25] Despite changes in external appearance, throughout colonial and postcolonial history, the *ruko* continues to represent the streetscape of main streets and a market sphere dominated by ethnic Chinese.

LAYERING THE FAÇADE: THE BILLBOARD AS CONCEALMENT

Scholars of the Indonesian legal regime have pointed out that the postcolonial governance of Indonesian citizenship by Suharto (1966–1998) was informed by colonial racial groupings that conceived the ethnic Chinese as a separate entity.[26] This "othering" of ethnic Chinese has given rise to the state-supported practices of both discriminating and assimilating against ethnic Chinese. As historian Tim Lindsey points out:

> After Suharto's New Order took control of the government from March 1966, a range of regulations were introduced, pressuring Chinese Indonesians to repudiate their "Chineseness" as with the adoption of Indonesian names; the limiting of public use of the Chinese language; the restriction of ethnic Chinese educational access; and the limiting of commercial opportunities for the ethnic Chinese.[27]

Such regulation were symptomatic of what sociologist Ariel Heryanto calls "the erasure of Chinese from public cultures" and were accepted by ethnic Chinese with a remarkable self-consciousness which, I would suggest, found expression in the external appearances of *ruko*.[28]

The question of visibility and signs of Chineseness thus was an issue during the New Order of Suharto. The state's assimilation policy sought to erase the exposure of Chinese cultures in the public space, and yet it still continued to identify the Chinese as an economic entity – a cultural code that has been partially accepted by the ethnic Chinese, via state pressures that oblige them to conform as "economic beings." In the 1980s, as the Indonesian economy took off, such conditions gave rise to a variety of innovations, one of which was the use of billboards to reconstitute the external appearances of *ruko*.

The *ruko* covered with billboards could be named as a phenomenon of the New Order of Suharto. The architectural refashioning of *ruko* at the time dealt with the more difficult question of how to represent a building type largely owned or occupied by ethnic Chinese, in the complex terrain of the Indonesian state's politics of "erasing Chinese culture from public space."[29] The billboard *ruko* is as much about townscape as it is about desire for representation, a theme that is at once profound and banal (Figure 2.3). While some architects find the billboard *ruko* aesthetically distasteful, it is nevertheless part of a wide range of symbolic evocations of the sociopolitical context within which it is embedded. Billboard *ruko* can be seen as a form of interplay between self-concealment and self-revelation under conditions of the state's erasure of Chinese identity from public space.

Figure 2.3 An example of contemporary billboarded *ruko* (courtesy of the author).

During the Suharto era, large-scale billboards were widely adopted by *ruko* owners. We could say that the indexical character of the billboards has, in fact, replaced the shop front of the *ruko*. The billboard advertise products (mostly imported), and carry explicit information for different interpretative communities to decode. The use of billboards may well be simply a business choice that has nothing to do with issues of politics and identity, but what the billboard brings to mind is the economy, the *ruko* and the Chinese. Small wonder that the billboard *ruko* persisted all through the period of Suharto's New Order, and only went out of favour after the collapse of the regime (Figure 2.4).

Perhaps the reason for the rise and fall of the billboard *ruko* can only be understood by way of locating it within the context of the Indonesian state's politics of erasure of Chinese identity in public culture. The billboard expressed and evoked the cultural politics of the state. The development no doubt contributed to the change in the external appearance of the *ruko*, but it also expressed the darker side of the social formation that produced it. The shifting of external appearances of the *ruko* from "shop front" to "billboard" discloses contradiction and conflicts (rather than simply reflecting a development process) in the urban environment.

Figure 2.4 ***Ruko*** **of the 1970s with frames for billboards in ruins, Gajah Mada Street, Jakarta (courtesy of the author).**

THE RISE AND FALL OF *RUKO*

Since the 1980s, along with the proliferation of billboards, the *ruko* has begun to be organized vertically, with multiple stories stacked one above the other. This towering of *ruko* produces a shallower inner space, but the lack of depth has been compensated by the spaces organized vertically. The formation of the upper floors constitutes an extended spatial separation of living (on the upper floors) from working (on the ground floor). Unlike the semi-public space of the ground floor, the upper floors serve to demarcate boundaries concealing activities unrelated to the first floor. The vertical layering gives the private space on the upper floors a sense of autonomy and with the window and facade almost entirely covered by large-scale billboards, the *ruko* effectively screens the living space of the upper levels.

The towering of the *ruko* and the masking of the billboards, however, did not prevent the Chinese from becoming targets of the May 1998 riots. As indicated earlier, this upheaval, which took place in some Indonesian cities, was state-instigated violence, designed to distract public attention from the failure of the state to deal with economic and political crises. The incident resulted in the death of at least 1,200 people (including looters who were trapped in

torched shopping malls), the mass rape of more than a hundred women of Chinese descent, and the raiding and torching of thousands of houses and *ruko* in Jakarta, Solo and Medan, mostly owned by ethnic Chinese.[30]

During the riots, the *ruko* failed to register as an ordinary, everyday aspect of a built environment, but rather came to connote "Chineseness" and the domination of economic commodities. Thus, the *ruko* became a prime target of looting and burning.[31] Owners of a *ruko* who considered themselves "non-Chinese" put signs on the doors of their *ruko* reading *Milik Pribumi* (owned by an indigenous person) or "Islam" for they apparently recognized that without such a sign, their *ruko* would be easily susceptible to anti-Chinese violence. Such signs also show how the *ruko* is not and has not been the sole purview of the ethnic Chinese.

Fearful of future violence, many inhabitants abandoned their *ruko* after the riots. This type of building came to be viewed negatively and its property value dropped significantly.[32] In the words of Paulus Nugraha and his colleagues who studied the *ruko* market in 2000, "People are afraid of living in the *ruko*."[33] It took several years for this building type to regain buyers' favour, and from 1998 onwards architects and developers began to mobilize against the billboard facades of the *ruko*.[34]

THE NEW LAYER: *RUKO* IN THE POST-SUHARTO ERA

The *ruko* has entered a new phase in the era of *reformasi* (reform associated with the aftermath of the Suharto era). After a few years of decline, the *ruko* has asserted itself once more as an engine for economic growth, but with a new design concept. In 2006, *Properti Indonesia*, in a special issue entitled, *Continuing the Hunt for the Ruko*, presented what it claims to be the significant advantages of the *ruko* today.[35] The report highlights recent innovations, the most important of which is the elimination of the residential function from the *ruko*:

> Although multifunctional in concept, the *ruko* today rarely includes the function of residence. Its prime function now is business. It is not surprising, therefore, that the *ruko* has been eventually categorized as commercial property and since then it has become the most profitable enterprise (*andalan*) for developers in marketing commercial areas. The *ruko* has been used to support the business of the shopping mall. With this [new function at the forefront of the commercial area], the *ruko* offers a variety of designs.[36]

Unlike the *ruko* from previous eras where living and working coexisted, the new design emphasizes business and is devoid of its core residential concept. The new *ruko* offers only a series of empty interior spaces, an invitation to

all kinds of functions and buyers. Gone is the skywell, as the office space is designed to accommodate an air conditioner. *Properti Indonesia* observes: "Recently, the interrelated three to four floors (which constitutes a unit) have been compartmentalized, with each floor representing an independent unit. It is this creativity in design concept that has made the *ruko* attractive to buyers."[37] While it is still self-consciously labelled a *ruko*, the building accommodates a variety of business activities, which according to marketing managers of the *ruko*, have made it more responsive to investment opportunities.

Additionally, *Properti Indonesia* also notices the changing appearance of this building type. For the *ruko* to assume a new identity, it must have an explicit architectural style (instead of a plain façade covered by billboards). The appearance of the *ruko*, which in the past has taken the form of either Chinese building styles or box-like structures covered with billboards, has recently adopted fashionable thematic styles of architecture associated with the Mediterranean, neoclassicism and minimalism (Figures 2.5 and 2.6).

Contemporary *ruko* do not always tolerate any visual intrusions, such as billboards, as one of the objectives of the new design is to disentangle the *ruko* from its past associations. In fact, some are ornamented with rich

Figure 2.5 Newly built neoclassical style *ruko* with car parking at the front, 2010 (courtesy of the author).

Figure 2.6 A minimalist style *ruko* (courtesy of the author).

profiles to prevent the easy mounting of billboards.[38] Another innovation concerns the location of the *ruko*. *Properti Indonesia* observes that developers have been disseminating *ruko* in various parts of the city, beyond the confinement of specific places associated with ethnic Chinese neighbourhoods. The new *ruko* are located in growing areas, and this in turn contributes to their economic growth. By integrating the *ruko* into new commercial zones (away from the established Chinese districts), the building type gains a new identity. Spatially, it becomes part of a shopping mall complex or the commercial areas of a new town secured by gates and security posts.[39]

The reviving of the *ruko* and the expanding of its presence through design strategies is an economic, social and political phenomenon. As a commercial building type that now targets a more flexible ownership, the new *ruko* has become emancipated from the relatively fixed identity of the Chinese. Identifying the *ruko* purely in commercial terms (rather than residential ones) means the owners or users of the new *ruko* assume a more abstract and certainly more distant identity. The marketing of the *ruko* as a new form of property has made it a commodity available to everyone who can participate in the market. However, in its new setting, the *ruko* is part of an emerging structure of exclusion that sets it apart from the street vendors with whom it used to coexist.

DISPLACING OUTER LAYER

In the past, at the front of each *ruko* there was a five-foot-wide space called the *kaki lima*, which, along with those of the neighbours, formed arcades that connected all of the buildings in a row at the street level. This extended area could be seen as an intermediate space to ease transition from exterior to interior. It also functioned as a pedestrian arcade for buyers to move from one shop to another. This *kaki lima* was usually used by owners to display their goods, but also by street vendors (who became known as *pedagang kaki lima* – literally, "five-feet vendors") to sell petty commodities. The spaces were functionally composite and multiple, and were zones of contact between the shop, the buyers and the vendors who appropriated the space. It was never entirely clear if the *kaki lima* was owned by the owner of the *ruko*, for in many cases it was controlled by the city government and local thugs who protected the space by excising fees from the vendors and *ruko* owners who used it. It was assumed that each user would exercise restraint and tolerance in this intermediate space, which carried connotative values of being relational and negotiable.

As we can see in Figures 2.5 and 2.6, the new *ruko* emerged at a time when interactive spaces such as the *kaki lima* were disappearing as an integrated element of the building. The new *ruko* has no *kaki lima* and thus no space to welcome street vendors. Instead it claims the territory that was once used by vendors for car parking, monitored by attendants who are also often security guards. Accommodating cars instead of vendors, the new *ruko* has become associated with the high-end establishment and by extension its exclusivity.

The new image of the *ruko* as a generator of formal economic growth in the post-Suharto era demands that it be located in prime areas, and this does not always happen without a challenge. The appearance of the *ruko* in a new neighbourhood often marks not only the opening up of that area to a new variety of commodities, but also means the potential displacement of vendors and smaller traders in the traditional market. Some activists, working on behalf of vendors and small traders, view the recent spread of the new *ruko* as contributing to the increased decline of the traditional marketplace.[40] They also express concern that the new *ruko* will displace petty traders who will then be forced to relocate further and further away from the prime areas of the main streets.

While the *ruko* has been transformed into a popular commodity that could potentially be owned by anyone in the market, this openness is limited to property owners, thereby excluding small mobile traders. Activist-architect Edwin Nafarin from Surabaya points out that the recently built *ruko*, which cost between 600 and 800 million rupiah (US$60,000–$80,000), are clearly beyond the reach of traders from the traditional market.[41] For small traders, the new *ruko* is often a structure of exclusion imposed from outside (or from

above by the local government, which benefits from the business) to impoverish small traders in the neighbourhood's traditional market. As a result, in the city of Malang, traders from several traditional markets are coming together to form an association to protect themselves from eviction as the city plans to build some *ruko* and shopping malls in their areas.[42]

Earlier, I examined how a certain idea about the ethnic Chinese is tied up in the discourses of the *ruko* and economic development. The new *ruko* in the post-Suharto era may have overcome the stereotype by turning the "ethnic" *ruko* into a purely class-based commercial building – an innovation that might have released the *ruko* from its association with Chinese residence. Central to the issue is how architecture and the terms used to define that architecture overlap with social typologies and how this link can be disentangled and re-managed, ironically, by a new class category.

THE HIDDEN LAYER: WHAT IS IN THE *RUKO* TODAY?

As a property of the market (rather than of the Chinese), today's *ruko* is open to a variety of owners and ownership. The diverse and thematic architectural styles of the new *ruko* project have become symbolic of the values of a transnational class and economy and they are open to any commercial enterprise and entrepreneur with enough capital. The new form assumes a variety of architectural styles, ranging from the highly decorated neoclassical style to minimalism, but these surface treatments (unlike the traditional shop front and the billboard *ruko*) bear no indexical reference to the function of the building. Furthermore, most of the new *ruko* have no residents except perhaps the owner's shopkeepers who are paid to take care of the place. In effect, they conceal and in some instances contradict what goes on inside. Such a building often incites curiosity from different interpretative communities who use keywords such as hidden (*terselubung*), suspicious (*curiga*), suggestive (*sinyalir*) and deceiving (*mengelambui*) to describe the new *ruko*.

Recently, an Islamic website in Palembang, South Sumatra, shared with its readers an opinion about a *ruko* and what seems to be lying behind it. A reporter wrote:

> One of the *ruko* in Yos Sudarso street seems to have become a hidden place for gambling (*perjudian terselubung*). The owner claims that the *ruko* is a hostel for office staff. But it is suspicious (*mencurigakan*)! It looks like a modest *ruko*, but the inside might appear like a high-class hotel protected by CCTV cameras around the building. This *ruko* could be deceiving (*mengelambui*) people.[43]

The suggestion here is that the orderly façade of the *ruko* might mask unruly acts in a deceptive manner. The interplay between visibility and invisibility

may well be a familiar trope in the Indonesian world, but not all ambiguities are acceptable, especially if they are played out in the *ruko*, which is considered an extraneous building type.

Newspapers occasionally report on the misuse of the *ruko* for illegal activities. They state that the ground floor of the *ruko* is often used as a cover for the activities taking place on the upper floors. For instance, in December 2005, in Tangerang, a team of police broke into a *ruko* that operated under the guise of a perfume factory. The police discovered that the upper floors were used to process and distribute illegal drugs (*sabu-sabu*). It took the police 10 days to detect and figure out the real activity in the interior of the *ruko*, which was designed in an innocuous-appearing modernist style.[44] In Surabaya, reports have come to the municipal office that many *ruko* used for spa and massage services (*panti pijat*) have extended these services to include prostitution.[45] Some bars offer a "double extra service" (*layanan plus-plus*) in their *ruko*. The first floor of the *ruko* is often used legally as a hair salon, but the upstairs is used as a nightclub and for prostitution with women reportedly coming from foreign countries. Another newspaper reported that with several nearby *ruko* engaging in such services, the formation of a red light district had gone unnoticed. The report recommends that security posts be set up in the neighbourhood so that people can watch *ruko* and report if they host illegal activities.[46]

Finally there is also a case of a *ruko* being used as a church. Because it is difficult to obtain a permit to build a church in Indonesia, some local Christian communities have sought alternative places to host a congregation. In February 2006, one of the biggest online media sources in Indonesia, *Detik.com* reported that a *ruko* in the Bandung City Square complex was being used as a church. As this was a violation of building permit regulations,[47] the church was instructed to close down. We do not know if there was another dimension to the building permit violation, but the episode points to the harassment of *ruko* that facilitate activities considered as inappropriate.

All these report point to the issues of transparency, morality and sincerity that prevail in the political cultures of the post-Suharto surveillance era. As outlined in the incidents above, critical references to *ruko* owners' insincerity and corruption in using the building for (what are considered as) unscrupulous activities are not uncommon, and have become a regular spectacle in the mass media. While these stories are clearly founded on a certain amount of credible evidence, it is clear that the intolerant reception of the *ruko* derives, at least residually, from its previous identity as an index of estrangement and distance associated with Chineseness. The new designs of *ruko* have adopted external appearances that break away from the image of a Chinese shop front or billboard (which depicts the ethnic Chinese as dealers and suppliers of commodities). Yet while shifting away from previous associations, the new *ruko* is still unable to deliver transparency, sincerity and loyalty – categories

that in the recent past had been used for interrogating the subjectivity of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. In these circumstances, the stylistic façade of the new *ruko* is unable to bridge the gap between concealing and revealing. The new building is still incapable of communicating to its inquisitive public what is inside the structure and it takes investigative members of civil society to unravel the truth behind the external appearances of the *ruko*.

THE EMERGING LAYER: ISLAMIC *RUKO*

In the previous section we saw how the new *ruko* is the target of the guardians of morality when suspicion arises in regard to what lies behind the façade. As in the case of the *ruko* being used as a church above, the concerns about morality are not only limited to issues of illicit conduct, but extend also to religion. In 2010, the mayor of the predominantly Islamic city of Depok on the outskirts of Jakarta promoted shopping centres with an Islamic atmosphere. In what is considered "the largest Islamic business complex" in Indonesia, the "Ruko Islamiyah" consists of a series of *ruko* with Islamic motifs constructed as part of a larger plan for the Great Saladin Square on 1.5 hectares of land (Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7 The *ruko* Saladin Square in Depok (courtesy of the author).

The Square features 48 golden domes and 47 minarets each 25 metres high to reflect the religion of the majority in Depok. Setyo, a sales executive of Great Saladin Square, announced that such features will give a sense of place to the 120 *ruko* units. So far, according to Setyo, "30 units have been sold. . . . *Insha Allah*, the Great Saladin Square will make the Muslim community in Depok proud."[48] The *ruko* will include such enterprises as a "showroom bank, mini-market, fast food restaurant, beauty salon, and bakery,"[49] and while a Chinese restaurant is allowed, only halal food can be served.[50] Beyond these facilities is a more serious proposal that would make the square distinctively Islamic. Arifin Ilham, an Ustad who was invited to promote the square, suggests that a mosque and a swimming pool for Muslim people be provided and shopkeepers should wear *jilbab* so that the square becomes "a model for doing business following the teaching of *Rasulullah Shallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* (the Prophet Muhammad)."[51] Depok's Ruko Islamiyah seeks to convey the truth of what lies behind the façade in a manner that is serious and transparent. For their part, the facades of the Ruko Islamiyah appropriate identifiable neo-Islamic imagery of Arabic windows, arches and a dome. However, as much as these elements try to assert propriety of place, one can ask, again, what lies behind the façade?

In any case, the Ruko Islamiyah shows a desire to express Islamic presence and clearly demonstrates that today's *ruko* is widespread across different social groups, beyond those of the ethnic Chinese.[52] In distinction to the billboard façade and earlier *ruko* associated with ethnic Chinese shops, the new *ruko* indexes neither the agency nor the residency behind the architectural facade. Emptied of subjectivity, it is open to appropriation by different social groups who aspire to achieve economic success. Yet, unlike the new neoclassical and minimalist *ruko*, the Ruko Islamiyah seeks to develop a specifically Islamic mode of self-representation that involves an attempt to confer on the *ruko* the quality of transparency by breaking down the division between the exterior and the interior.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have seen how the design of *ruko* can be understood in terms of both entanglement and disentanglement in relation to the positioning of ethnic Chinese in Indonesian history. We have also witnessed how architecture gains its meaning not only through form, but by how it is spoken of, and how we are told about it. This chapter has also demonstrated both the tension and symbolic reconciliation of the exterior and interior in *ruko* across different political regimes in Indonesia. Such negotiation is shaped by the historical experiences of the ethnic Chinese and the shift in cultural attitudes,

social perceptions and political ideas towards them. The social structure of the colonial state and Suharto's New Order positioned ethnic Chinese as the other within a hierarchy of social and political power that found expression and evocation in the changing appearances of the *ruko*. The significant shifts from a residential *ruko* to a commercial building type following the fall of the Suharto's New Order have produced yet another type of architecturalized *ruko* that supplies a stylistic façade to a landscape of broadening commodification and sharpening social division.

The *ruko* style continues to encounter a variety of resistances, but it has also found widespread acceptance. Its association with the ethnic Chinese and the economy remains unstable as it incorporates both dominant and local cultural practices. It can be adapted to other milieus such as that of Islam, which seeks to develop a particular mode of self-representation in generic forms such as pointed domes and towers. Today's *ruko* is categorized by Real Estate Indonesia (REI), a developers' interest group, as a commercial building and not a residence as in the earlier *ruko*. This marketing strategy, as we have seen in the example of Depok's Ruko Islamiyah has made the *ruko* flexibly open to all kinds of businesses and owners, and subjected to unpredictable activities and redefinitions. This chapter has shown how the external appearances of the *ruko* (including billboards) not only represent aesthetic, utilitarian and economic considerations, but also express and evoke societal inter-group contact, exchange and contestation, although certainly not always in a transparent way.

While the position of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia remains precarious and this still unstable society undergoes a transition towards democracy, the *ruko* supplies a façade to such a changing political landscape and cultural attitudes. The Construction of Chinese identity and contestation of that identity are a set of practices associated with the idea of the nation. While the position of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia remains precarious as this still unstable nation moves with uncertainty to a post-authoritarian era, the *ruko* supplies a façade to such a changing political landscape and cultural attitudes.

NOTES

1. "Kerusuhan di Jakarta."

2. See Knapp, *Chinese Houses of Southeast Asia*; For studies of shophouses and Chinese architecture in Indonesia, see Widodo, *The Boat and the City;* Widodo, "The Chinese Diaspora's Urban Morphology"; Sopandi, "Vanishing Dwelling Culture"; Pratiwo, *Arsitektur Tradisional Tionghoa;* Pratiwo, "The Chinese Town of Lasem"; Pratiwo, "Seeking the Spirit of the Age."

3. The basic floor plan, according to an architectural historian, "never seems to change from past to present." Handinoto, "Lingkungan "Pecinaan,"" 28.

4. See Urban Redevelopment Authority, *Chinatown Historic District*; Liu, *Pastel Portraits*; Lee, "The Singapore Shophouse"; Chang and Teo, "The Shophouse Hotel"; and Fels, "Penang's Shophouse Culture."

5. "Ruko Primadona Baru Properti." [Ruko: The new prima donna in the property market] *Kontan*, March 23, 1998; Johan, "Rumah-Toko: Alternatif di Tengah Koreksi Pasar," [*Ruko*: An alternative choice for market recovery] *Bisnis Properti*, October 1995, 88–89.

6. "Ruko Terus Diburu," [Hunting ruko] *Properti Indonesia,* May 2006, 20.

7. Wahyuasih, "Masalah dan Dilema Perkembangan Ruko Dalam Arsitektur Lingkungan Perkotaan dan Pemukiman," 2.

8. Ibid.

9. The interrelationship between building typology and urban morphology has become central to architectural history, especially since the publication by Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* in 1966. This chapter, however, seeks to contribute to a more contextual analysis of building type, such as those provided by, among others, King, "Terminologies and Types"; Lawrence, "Type as Analytical Tool"; and Markus, "Social Practice and Building Typologies."

10. Budiman, "Portrait of the Chinese in Post-Suharto Indonesia."

11. MyFamily Accounting, "Mengapa orang cina lebih senang tinggal di ruko?"[Why do Chinese people like to live in ruko?] 1MyFamily Accounting (blog), September 13, 2007. http://myfamilyaccounting.wordpress.com/2007/09/13/mengapa-orang-cina-lebih-senang-tinggal-di-ruko/.

12. Ibid.

13. As cited in Kusumaputra, "Ikawan bangun Hotel" *Kompas*, February 14, 2011.

14. As cited in Rambey, "Dilema bangunan ruko."

15. Cited in Rambey, ibid.

16. As cited in Kusumaputra, "Hendro Gondokusumo."

17. Johannes Widodo, e-mail message to the author, May 9, 2011.

18. Handinoto, "Lingkungan 'Pecinaan.'" See also Khol, *Chinese Architecture*; Knapp indicates that "many (shophouses in Malacca) are quite similar to the shophouses and terrace homes found in towns in southern China in that they have prominent skywells – small courtyards – that open up the interiors to light and air." Knapp, *Chinese Houses of Southeast Asia*, 20.

19. Bob Hering describes a colonial city such as Batavia most vividly: "Racial discrimination, often endorsed by law . . . with *totok-belanda* and *indo-belanda* (pure Dutch and Eurasian Dutch) displaying notions of superiority, often mingling it with utter callousness toward natives and foreign Orientals laboring under their supervision. These attitudes of apartheid based upon colour and race, were further reflected in the peculiar, heterogenetic, caste-structured, spatial layout of the capital city." Hering, *M.H. Thamrin,* 6–7.

20. Historian Susan Abeyasekere indicates the importance of women in shaping the intercultural traditions of colonial Jakarta: "Ethnic groups in Batavia differed from one another in socio-economic status, employment, areas of residence and health records. What brought them together was women (who through marriages, partnerships and concubinage) were the stable force within the city, helping men to adapt and

exerting a constant influence on the children. As a result of their influence, the life of the Europeans and Chinese became more Indonesian." As for the Chinese communities, "The day-to-day life of *peranakan* (Indies-born) Chinese, who made up the vast bulk of the Chinese population in Batavia, was intermingled with belief in Indonesian spirits, consultation of *dukun* (Indonesian healers) and so on." Abeyasekere, *Jakarta*, 75–76.

21. Mrazek, *Engineers of Happy Land*, 176.

22. For a discussion of the Chinese as a racial minority and commercial bourgeoisie (provoked by Benedict Anderson), see Copper, *Studying Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia*.

23. See Kusno, *Appearances of Memory*.

24. Liem, *Riwajat Semarang*.

25. For a discussion on the revival of art deco *ruko* in the 1990s, see Kusno, *Appearances of Memory*.

26. Lindsey, "Reconstituting the Ethnic Chinese"; Aguilar, Jr., "Citizenship, Inheritance and the Indigenising of 'Orang Chinese' in Indonesia."

27. Lindsey, "Reconstituting the Ethnic Chinese," 54.

28. Heryanto, "Ethnic Identities and Erasure."

29. Ibid.

30. Purdey, "Anti-Chinese Violence," 26. For a more recent assessment, see: Panggabean and Smith, "Exploring Anti-Chinese Riots."

31. In his analysis of the looting of Chinese stores in May 1998, James Siegel told a story of how a looter returned to the shop he looted a few days earlier with the intention of buying some items from it. The looter found the shop was still closed, and he knocked at the door and asked why the owner had not opened the store at such a late hour. This story troubles the line that divides the normality of everyday life and the abnormality of times of chaos. It also indicates the profound ambiguity of Chinese *ruko* in the life of ordinary Indonesians, who were, as evidenced by the story above, both looters and customers. See Siegel, "Early Thoughts on the Violence."

32. Nugraha, et al., "Peninjauan Faktor-faktor Penentu Rumah-Toko."

33. Ibid., 112.

34. Architects discovered that while the floor plan can be standardized, the facades at least could be designed in a distinct and personal way. This approach often starts the design process and concentrates on the integrity of the exterior which constitutes the whole block of *ruko* (Author's conversation with architects in Jakarta, June 12, 2011).

35. There are of course other self-built (often unregulated and undocumented) *ruko* in various parts of the city, but *Properti Indonesia* concerns itself only with the *ruko* built by large developers.

36. "Ruko Terus Diburu," 20.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., 21.

39. Ibid., 28.

40. "Penggusuran Dicemaskan."

41. "Arsitektur Cuma Cari Untung."

42. "Penggusuran Dicemaskan."

43. "Mes Karyawan Disinyalir Tempat Perjudian" [Workers place might be a place for gambling], *Musirawas Express*, May 15, 2010 http://musirawasekspres.blogspot.com/2010/05/mes-karyawan-disnyalir-tempat.htm.

44. "Ruko Pabrik Sabu-sabu Disamarkan Jadi Pembuat Parfum," [Perfume making conceals drug factory in a ruko] *Tempo Interaktif*, December 9, 2005. http://www.tempo.co/read/news/2005/12/09/05770392/Ruko-Pabrik-Sabu-sabu-Disamarkan-Jadi-Pembuat-Parfum.

45. "Ruko-Ruko di Surabaya Jadi Tempat Prostitusi."

46. Ibid.

47. "Dua Gereja di Ruko."

48. Ishoba, "Depok akan bangun komplek bisnis bercorak Islam terbesar," [Depok will build a largest business complex with Islamic character] December 21, 2010 at http://ishoba.wordpress.com/ 2010/12/21/depok-akan-bangun-komplek-bisnis-bercorak-islam-terbesar/.

49. Ibid.

50. Author's interview with a staff member in the marketing office for the *ruko* in Saladin Square, June 8, 2011.

51. Ishoba, "Depok akan bangun komplek bisnis bercorak Islam terbesar."

52. This chapter does not deal with the Muslim Chinese even though there are interesting cases of *ruko* mosques. For instance, Lautze Mosque built in 1961 by Karim Oei, a Muslim Chinese, is located in the "Chinese district" of Sawah Baru, Jakarta. The mosque occupies two *ruko* to accommodate the growing number of Muslim Chinese from various parts of the city who need introductory training in the knowledge and practice of Islam before they return to the mosques of their respective communities. Lautze Mosque has never adopted a dome or minaret to signify Islamic identity. The four-storey building maintains a plain facade of *ruko* similar to those of its neighbourhood. With no iconic marker, the Lautze Mosque appears contextual as its façade blends into the homogenous surface of the surrounding *ruko*. The mosque is considered by many as an exemplary model of the assimilation of ethnic Chinese into the Muslim community. Its plain external appearance is seen as an acceptable representation of the Islamic presence by the Chinese Muslim community. The unaltered façade points to what the *ruko* does not easily reveal: the Muslim identity of some ethnic Chinese, which is not disclosed by building type or ornamentation. For a report on LauTze Mosque, see Achmad Sabran, "Rasa Pembauran di Masjid Lautze"; See also Saputri, "Masjid Lau Tze, Budaya Tionghoa dan Nilai Islami."

Part II

PUBLIC EYES/PRIVATE LENSES

Chapter 3

Cartoons and *Cersil* (Martial Art Stories)

Let me begin with what I have gathered from my little casual survey of the current Northeast Asian (mainly Japanese and Korean) pop culture in Indonesia, even though I know hardly anything about them. The CDs of Hamasaki Ayumi and Utada Hikaru have only been available in Indonesia since 2004. Korean pop star Rain (Hoon Jung Ji) just appeared (maybe five years ago) in Indonesian TV commercials and in newspaper advertisements for the Clear Shampoo company. As for TV dramas, Ito Hideaki (who starred in *Descent, Yasha,* and *Boy Hunt*) was relatively unknown until 2003. Though Ito has become popular since then, it seems likely that if he arrived earlier in the Indonesian pop scene he would have become a major success. One major obstacle blocking Ito's success to the top was none other than the four fabulous Taiwanese boys known as the F-4. The "fabulous four" became popular by acting in hit dramas such as the *Meteor Garden*. Though Ito's popularity was challenged by all four members, his real competition on the pop culture scene was mainly with Dao Ming Si, who was then very popular even among singing "beggars" in the busy Jakarta buses.[1] Japanese comic books only became translated into Indonesian in the 2000s. Pirated anime videos (many of them bearing Chinese labels) also became widely available only in the 2000s. *Crayon Sinchan* (the flirtatious foul-mouthed kid) was only aired on TV in 2004. Thanks to Indonesian democracy, it became an instant blockbuster and is immensely popular even though it horrifies parents who watch Sinchan with their kids (not surprisingly Sinchan is formally banned from entering Singapore). *Doraemon* didn't arrive in Indonesia until the mid-1990s, but the hard working entrepreneur *Oshin* was perhaps the early bird; even so, she appeared on Indonesian national television only in the late 1980s.

What I have picked up from this casual survey is that the icons of pop culture from Japan (and Korea) are newcomers, for most of them have only

become known to Indonesians in the past 10 or 15 years. So the question is why is it that Japanese pop culture has only recently become important when, since the early seventies, Japan had already become the single most important external investor in the region? A series of other questions came to mind. Under what conditions can popular culture from Japan (or Korea) appear in Indonesia? Would it have been possible, say, 20 or 30 years ago? Why have Dao Ming Si and Sinchan become so popular in the 2000s? Now, suppose that Dao Ming Si and Sinchan arrived in the 1970s, what sort of reaction would they have provoked from the Indonesian audience? It is difficult to believe at least that the powerful conservative wing of the military would not have felt compelled to follow Singapore to shut the country's door by saying: "You cannot come in Sinchan at least until I let you." Is it possible that Sinchan could only be seen in Indonesia after Suharto was removed from office? Is the serials popularity due in large measure to the cultural opening of the post-Suharto era? Under what conditions can an Asian pop star or a particular icon of pop culture appear and under what conditions can one disappear beyond the effect of market forces?

This chapter aims at responding to some of these questions by way of a hypothesis: the late entry of Northeastern pop culture is due to the particular position of ethnic Chinese in the political cultures of Indonesia under the New Order of Suharto (1965–1998). The aftermath of the anticommunist pogroms in 1965 had an enormous impact on the kind of East Asian pop culture that could circulate in Indonesia. Chinese pop cultures resembled Chinese associations, schools, books, magazines and signboards, all of which were prohibited as part of the New Order's regulation of "Chinese cultures." This cultural policy towards Chinese Indonesian thus shaped the choice and the circulation of East Asian pop cultures. One aim was to control the market of Chinese popular cultures and the other was to break existing politico-cultural ties with Communist China.

For instance, in less than three years after the massacre, along the line of the implementation of the assimilation policy for ethnic Chinese, Indonesian government began to consider the quality and quantity of Mandarin films from Taiwan and Hong Kong, which by then topped the list of foreign films.[2] Starting from the 1970s, the government imposed an import quota on Mandarin films for fear of producing "adverse influences on the country's culture and politics" and the limited quota was largely given to the genre of romance, kung fu and gangster movies.[3] In this sense, the government (via the importation of particular Mandarin films) helped promote the imagination of "Chinese cultures" in terms of martial arts (*wu xia*) and Hong Kong-type mafias. The "Chinese" culture from East Asia (by way of Hong Kong and Taiwan) served as a kind of deus ex machina for both Chinese Indonesian and the Indonesian state to exorcise communism and resolve what could stand as the expression of "Chinese culture."

In her study of the relations between media and collective memories of Chinese Indonesians, Aimee Dawis usefully points out the important roles and effects of kung fu movies on the identity formation of Chinese Indonesian during the Suharto era.[4] In this chapter I extend Dawis' study by emphasizing the repressive role of the state, which contradictorily helped strengthen Chinese cultures as Chinese Indonesians (as a result of cultural discrimination) sought "imagined security" through kung fu films. I argue that the state, in contradiction to the policy of assimilation, did promote "Chinese cultures" but one that fits with the stereotype of Chinese. In this sense the policy of assimilation was less a practice of integration. Instead it was a discourse of othering, which fixed ethnic Chinese identity rather than abandoning or transforming it. In effect, the regime approved of particular images of Chinese cultures, and this, as I will conclude, also constructed (inadvertently) a framework for the (subsequent) different reception and perception of contemporary East Asian popular cultures in the post-Suharto era.

Chinese Indonesians today live in a completely different era. Since the tenure of President Abdurrahman Wahid (1999–2001), discriminative policies against ethnic Chinese have been systematically dropped even though complaints about practices of discrimination continue. Chinese traditional clothes and dances, Chinese New Year and newspaper, and Chinese language and organizations have once again become part of Indonesian public cultures today.[5] We can even say that Chinese cultures have become accepted commodities that could be accessed by non-Chinese. They are no longer the cultures of "the other." Instead, they are available for appropriation by and integration into the general cultures of Indonesia. Nevertheless, if we look across the various representations of Chinese identities, we would see that the Chinese cultures that have become public are those accepted by the political and cultural conservatism of Indonesian society.[6] It is in this sense that we feel the importance of investigating once more the production of Chinese cultures in the Suharto era even as this exercise is rested on some speculative interpretations.

Focusing on the New Order (before the current wave of Japanese and Korean pop cultures) highlights the importance of looking at the recent past to illuminate the political life of popular culture in the country today. Moreover, looking back at the 1970s and 1980s would allow for a retrieval of some memories of the East Asian pop culture that I grew up with, not only to make some sense of them, but also to see the connection between them and some of the pop culture I have been encountering today. In this chapter, instead of focusing on the power of the state and the market, I focus on the Sino-Indonesian world.[7] I look at the ways in which Hong Kong comics and kung fu novels survived and outgrew their original social base as they became appropriated by ethnic Chinese communities in Indonesia during the 1970s

and 1980s. Central to the "extended production" of this popular culture is the repressive regime of Suharto, which helped create meaning for East Asian popular cultures. But first let me discuss some earlier formations of popular cultures to historicize the illustrative materials I am using for this essay. The first involves the position of ethnic Chinese in Indonesian history and second, the role of comic and popular novels in the historical memories of Indonesia.

THE ETHNIC CHINESE IN INDONESIA

The current intraregional flows of East Asian popular cultures in Indonesia is, if we are willing to stretch things a bit, the descendants of very earlier flow brought not by (state-sponsored) cultural industries but by mostly migrants from the coastal districts of Fukien and Kwantung. Since the 1890s, these migrants, through fate and fortune, had already been engaged with the new world of mechanical reproduction, such as newspapers, fiction, magazines and advertisements. And, one could say, that they were indeed the pioneers of various formations of East Asian popular cultures in Indonesia. Yet, it is important to note that until the turn of the century most of these migrants identified themselves by clan or home town and scarcely regarded themselves as "Chinese." They found themselves in various places in the archipelago, and if left alone, they would have gradually absorbed into the general population, by ways of intermarriage and various deep cross-cultural bonds.

But being in the colony, these people were never left alone, the colonial state of the Netherlands East Indies classified them juridically as "Foreign Orientals," subcategory Chinese, who were placed in between the European and the indigenous population. During the age of anti-colonial nationalism in the early twentieth century, the Chinese immigrants and their descendants found themselves for the first time, like it or not, caught between a racist colonial regime and nativist nationalists. This was of course also the time of Pan-Chinese nationalism (under the aegis of Sun Yat Sen), which articulated a consciousness of being "Chinese" (even though this was not a singular position).[8]

Through these various forces, by the early twentieth century, Indonesian Chinese were drawn into the question of who they were and especially who they should be.[9] They assumed various identities, but many found themselves less capable of becoming the "Chinese" that the colonial state and the Pan-Chinese nationalism wanted them to be. Instead, a large number of them complicated the classificatory grid.[10] They blurred both the Foreign Oriental category and the Pan-Chinese nationalism by sub-classifying among themselves culturally, linguistically and materially, and should we also say visually, into "totok" (the "pure") and "peranakan" (the rooted child) as

well as something in between these two categories. The (pure) "totok" was seen as culturally and politically belonging to China, whereas the (rooted) "peranakan" displayed "a wondrous array of acculturative, adaptive and assimilative phenomena."[11] Yet, these were fuzzy categories for the "rooted" might retain a fantasy of the imagined China and the "pure" were committed to never return to China. This internal violence of categories (in response to the call for identity by the forces of nationalism and colonialism) often got expressed in a variety of cultural representations.

The era of nationalism was after all a time of uncertainty, but it was also the moment for developing Chinese identity outside the categories inscribed by the colonial state and the Pan-Chinese nationalist in China. James Siegel described this moment in a most succinct way:

> Certain Chinese return to China, of course, but the path of Indies Chinese nationalism was not to see in "China" a place where, uniquely, Chinese identity could be developed. At the same time, Chinese in the Indies naturally enough had adapted themselves in important ways to life, particularly Javanese life, without becoming "Javanese" but rather "Indies Chinese.[12]

The causes for this urgency to struggle over identity and identification were many, ranging from the sense that Indonesia was part of the world-in-motion to the implementation of the liberal policy in the socio-economic and political life of the colony.[13] For the Chinese in the Indies, the key moment was the end of the urban ghetto policy and the rigid travel-pass system in the early twentieth century, which led to a Chinese "migration" to different territories in search of livelihood outside the previous colonial economic arrangement.[14] The crucial point here is not merely that the unleashing of the Chinese from their colonial ghetto produced a clash of economic interests with other members of the plural societies (which led to anti-Chinese riots just a decade after the end of the residential restriction),[15] but the formation of a "public sphere" where various types and forms of cultural expressions are openly encountering, hybridizing and contesting each other in "new" ways, even though mutual absorption of cultures had been going on for centuries. What was new then was the sense among Chinese communities that "Chinese" identity could no longer be based on the colonial framework, which in the past had created a place for them. In the new time, their socio-economic presence could no longer be tied to colonial authority. Instead they had to redefine their relation to themselves and to their neighbours.[16] Central to this self-redefinition is the language of Melayu, the lingua franca, which was available to the peranakan Chinese and shared by other Melayu-speaking groups. The peranakan Chinese used it effectively in the public sphere and turned the language into what has then been known as "Sino-Malay" language.[17]

The use of Sino-Malay as a vehicle for self-definition in the public sphere suggested nevertheless an effort to come to terms with the fact that Chinese are also Indonesian. The lingua franca of Sino-Malay became a tool for such an experiment for in that language one does not find only Dutch, Chinese or Javanese but instead all of the languages are united as one.[18] As if to express a hopeful experiment about who the peranakan could be and what they could do for the Indies, at the turn of the early twentieth century a significant group of intellectuals and journalists produced an enormous corpus of writing mostly in Sino-Malay. Their struggles for new cultural expressions were not limited to textual representation. Instead they experimented with arrays of visual cultures, including comic strip. In the following I describe the significance of the first comic strip by a Chinese Indonesian in the 1930s. Like popular novels in Sino-Malay, historically comics are also devices for self-invention and methods to cope with the state's cultural policy.

THE VISUAL AND TEXTUAL POLITICS OF EARLIER COMICS

According to observers of Indonesian comics, the first comic strip by an Indonesian was *Ko Put On* (Brother Restless in Fukianese), which appeared in 1930 in the daily *Sin Po*, a Sino-Malay newspaper based in Batavia.[19] The artist Kho Wan Gie was a peranakan Chinese. Born in 1908, Kho could be seen as a product of the post-Ghetto Chinese who ran into all kinds of people and embraced the new world of magazines, newspapers and fiction written in Sino-Malay. Kho drew Ko Put On in the midst of contestation over the place of peranakan Chinese in the public sphere of Indonesian politics and in the decades of normality and modernization of the 1930s through the year before Japanese occupation.[20]

Living in the late colonial age sense of normality, Kho drew Pu On without political intention. In fact, according to Kho, he drew Put On "merely to entertain."[21] Nevertheless, Put On remains a "restless" character. And this restlessness may be attributed to his demand for recognition of a need that could only be understood within the sociopolitical pressure of the time. Put On's demand for recognition came close to his wish to become a popular figure in the environment within which he was embedded. Myra Sidharta points out that Put On was not only popular among its readers at the time, but in the comic itself he is depicted as a popular character (Figure 3.1).[22]

The overweight bum-like heroic bachelor is recognized by almost everyone depicted in the comic and he interacts a lot with his surroundings and by extension also with his imagined audience. He is following "the will of the era" ("*kehendak zaman*") and acting according to the everyday urgency of the time. Put On, however, has never quite changed. He remains a bachelor,

Figure 3.1 The comic strip of Ko Put On from Sin Po, circa 1935 (courtesy of the author).

a position that allows him to resist a "normal" life and to float spatially according to the rhythm of the time. One could grasp this mobility through his dress code, which changes according to the different settings in which he found himself. He moves around (un)easily and becomes involved in the local events as an embodied participant. The theme of reaching out and being recognized by everyone are central to Put On.

Language plays a major role in all this. Put On is portrayed as a very talkative fellow. The texts are as expressive as the images. Together they show Put On as always being part of the era within which he is embedded. To understand the significance of the comic of Put On thus is to set the verbal expression of the art against the linguistic politics at the time. In his speech, Put On uses Sino-Malay by ways of Hokkien, Melayu and Dutch in ways that he combines them all to express a language that is after all the popular speech of Batavia that one could learn from the street. While moving around, Put On consistently uses Sino-Malay to a degree of claiming the popular language for Chinese themselves, as well as for other ethnic groups. The language Put On uses is as attractive as his gesture. In some ways, one could only think about the verbal and visual arts of Kho Wan Gie as opening up a possibility of claiming a space for Chinese to participate in every aspect of Indonesian life. The demand for participation and recognition takes a path leading to the acceptance of Chinese and the Sino-Malay language as an Indonesian language. This is quite radical in the context of Dutch colonial policy, which had always

been to segregate the Chinese from being integrated into the indigenous world of Indonesia. Put On (and by extension Kho Wan Gie) is aware of the fact that he is not a native, but he tries to show the fact that he too is very Indonesian.

Kho Wen Gie belonged to the age of normality. He went to Batavia in 1927, a year after the violent end of popular radicalism. Like other forms of cultural expressions, comic strips are significant for they have also evolved under particular regimes of representation, and in some ways they have been an effective device for both representations of identities and fantasies of liberation from the cultural representation of the authority in the early twentieth-century colonial Indonesia.

This struggle over cultural identity and identification, at once social, political and economic, continues into our own era. The governments of the postcolonial era, like that of the colonial time, sought to represent popular cultures such as, comics and popular novels as forms of cultural expression not to be taken seriously; and they were tolerated in so far as they could "only entertain" and never become influential politically. Behind this discriminatory climate of culture and authority lies the state's fear of uncontrollable linguistic and cultural expressions and the need to create an internal other(s) for the governing of national imagination. The discriminatory official nationalism of the Suharto regime for instance can be regarded as a return to what had once prevailed in colonial times.

REPRESENTING ETHNIC CHINESE IN THE NEW ORDER

The ethnic Chinese continue to find themselves living through different types of power relations many of which remain discriminatory. During the Suharto era (1965–1998), the government institutionalized "mono-cultural assimilation policy" to both produce and erase "Chinese identity."[23] The policy produced an exclusive category of *Cina* by requiring people identified as ethnic Chinese to undergo special registrations for citizenship, identity card, birth certificate and family card. This legal discourse, inherited largely from the Dutch colonial category of "foreign Orientals," placed ethnic Chinese as the "other" within the body of the nation. The rationale for this was that, unlike the indigenous population, the "homeland" of ethnic Chinese was considered as located outside the territory of the nation. This discourse had the political effect of scapegoating the "Chinese" so that they would be held responsible for the problems in Indonesia's development. On the other hand, the assimilation policy, given its mission to assimilate, restricted the ethnic Chinese from accessing Chinese language and forming social organization, and thus erased Chinese cultures from the public life of Indonesia. The idea behind this was that ethnic Chinese were not Indonesian enough and therefore they must be

integrated, indiscriminately, into Indonesian society. Under this scenario, the state was helping the ethnic Chinese to integrate themselves into Indonesian society. This contradictory policy of simultaneously producing and erasing "Chinese identity" had created a profound ambiguity among ethnic Chinese communities over who they were as Indonesians. The force of legal classification lies not only in the memory of the state, but also in the self-perceptions and representations of Chinese Indonesian. For the peranakan Chinese, access to the public sphere during Suharto era carries along questions such as what can be said and how to say them. A certain aspect of self-censorship thus is involved which, while assumed the effective operation of power, nevertheless offers opportunities for different kinds of creative expression of identities.

Below are such stories that may also illustrate to us how popular cultural flows of East Asia assume many different styles and forms that are often unplanned, unexpected and unnoticed. Central to this transformation is the specificity of the socio-cultural and political life of the country within which the ethnic Chinese lived. The attempts of the peranakan Chinese to engage in and reconcile with the place within which they live have made popular cultures from East Asia a resource for self-invention and a strategic way of coping with the state's discriminatory policy. How did the ethnic Chinese (and by implication, the Indonesian state) respond to the culture of Northeast Asia, 50 years after the birth of Put On, in the 1980s, well before the current influx of Japanese and Korean pop cultures? Let me now turn to our recent past through our first case.

THE MODERNIST FORM OF PAK TUNTUNG AND THE MASTER Q OF HONG KONG

Figure 3.2 shows an image of Naruto Ninja that appeared recently in a popular cartoon strip of a newspaper in the city of Medan, North Sumatra, where I grew up.[24] It shows Pak Tuntung shocked by what he saw: his son, after watching Naruto on television, has turned himself into Naruto Ninja. This cartoon indicates to us not only the power of Japanese anime today, but also the generational gap between Pak Tuntung, the father (who belongs to the world of 1970s and 1980s), and his son. Pak Tuntung is depicted as belonging to the previous era. He appears awkward in the present and those who have been following him would have no difficulty in seeing in him the constant theme of alienation and displacement. Pak Tuntung is often depicted as unable to catch up with the time and the space in which he is embedded. He is nevertheless conforming to his own manner. He could appear as a good husband as well as a womanizer; he could be an athlete, a film star or an environmentalist but his wife on the other hand never plays a role other than a

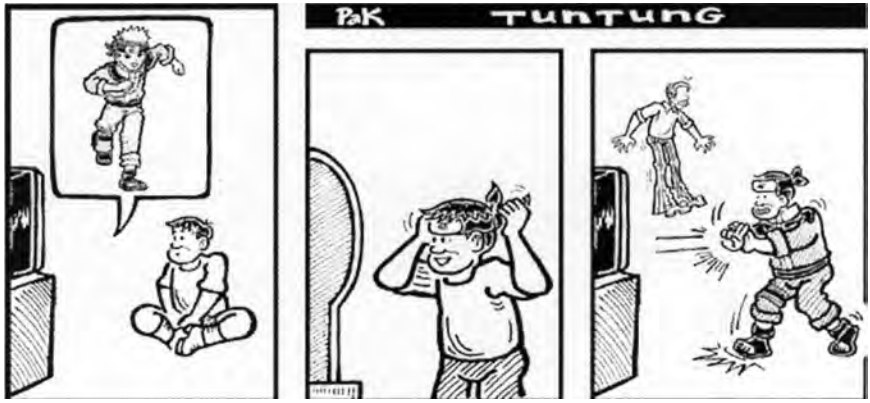

Figure 3.2 Pak Tuntung from *Analisa* newspaper, 2007 (courtesy of the author).

housewife. During the Suharto era, Basuki (the creator) consistently avoided political themes in his work, and only in the post-Suharto era has he begun to explore some socially and politically oriented themes; even so, his views are generally mainstream and conservative.

The cartoon strip featuring Pak Tuntung gained popularity in the 1970s through 1990s (and to the present) and has become a mainstay of *Analisa*, the metropolitan newspaper of Medan until today.[25] The original artist is Hu Wei Tien, who happens to be my uncle-in-law.[26] His Indonesian name is Basuki (otherwise known as Pak Tuntung). Basuki is a peranakan Chinese. His grandmother is ethnic Batak from North Sumatra and his father is ethnic Chinese, but his mother tongue is Fukianese and he speaks Mandarin at home with members of his family. Like many Chinese Indonesians in Medan, Basuki does not always feel at home with the official Indonesian language and therefore, as he explains, his work has hardly any text. There is no verbal expression in Pak Tuntung. Unlike Ko Put On, Pak Tuntung never seems to have speech. Instead Basuki uses non-stereotypical naturalized images primarily to convey his message about life and human relations.

At a glance we might find it quite striking that Basuki, who is consciously investing his own domestic life with Chinese language and culture, does not provide any visible signifier of Chinese identity in his depiction of the social life of Pak Tuntung. Instead, Pak Tuntung appears in the "global" fashions of the 1970s – the *Hala-hala* pants and boots and the hair cut of Elvis Presley. Unlike Ko Put On, Pak Tuntung has never changed his dress code even as he is aware of the changes around him.[27] His facial expressions are quick to respond to different things he encounters but he makes no attempt to articulate a word for them. However, if we take into consideration the political ecology of his time, that is, the state policy that sought to erase Chinese signs from the

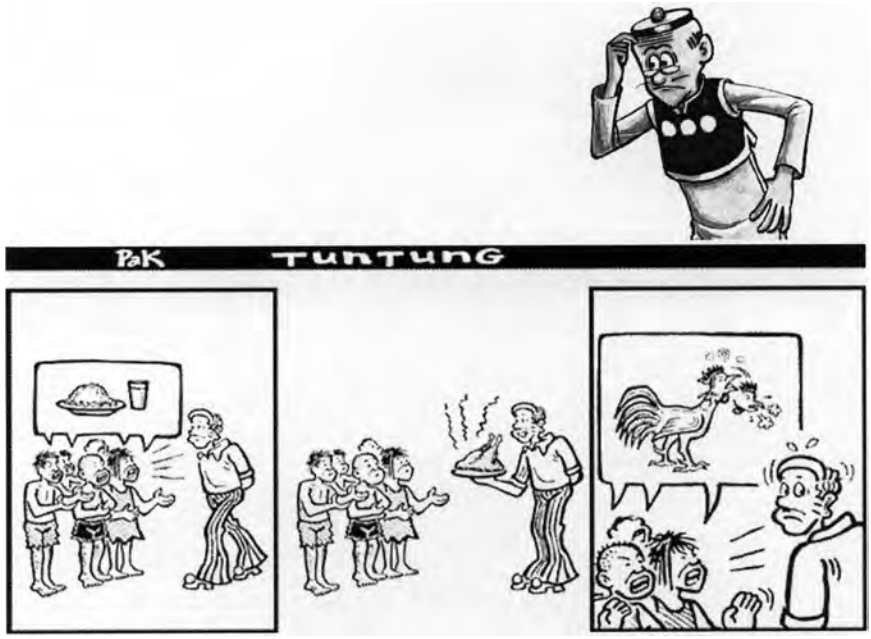

Figure 3.3 Pak Tuntung, *Analisa*, circa 2007 (?) (courtesy of the author).

public sphere, then we can say that Basuki's representation of Pak Tuntung is in a way quite Chinese – speechless in public and hiding behind supra-local contemporary fashion while appearing awkward in the social environment of which he is a part. For instance, Pak Tuntung often finds himself surprised by what he encounters even as he tries to reach out to make sense of the realities around him. (Figure 3.3).

Now, if we look a little bit deeper into the aesthetic of Pak Tuntung, and this is also acknowledged by Basuki himself, we realize that he is very much influenced by the master of Hong Kong comic strips, Alfonso Wong (1960s to 1990s), especially his *Lau Fu Tze* (otherwise known as the *Old Master Q*) of which Basuki is a great fan.[28] As we know, Alphonso Wong used very few words in his work, but, like Basuki, he was able to condense visual narrative in a small space.

Thus Pak Tuntung, beyond mimicking *Lao Fu Tze*, gives visible form to his identity as ethnic Chinese through the themes of alienation, estrangement and bewilderment in the city of Medan. The technique of representation in *Lau Fu Tze* is important to him in so far as it allows Basuki to express his own subjectivity – or better his ethnic Chinese subjectivity – in the Indonesian world of which he is a part but not quite. It is probably no coincidence that Pak Tuntung actually means "Thung-Thung" in Mandarin,[29] meaning

"children" forever, but in the context of Sino-Indonesian, these children are also "infantile subjects" who for some reasons cannot grow up[30]; they either continue to live in their own world or never quite belong to the world in which they are embedded. These infantile subjects could be said to be representing the peranakan Chinese of Basuki's generation who are seemingly suspended in a historical amnesia and trapped in the timeless space and spaceless time of the Suharto era. Pak Tuntung appears to have little sense of his past, but continues to reach out to the ungraspable present reality. On the theme of reaching out and the failure to do so, it might be interesting to bring Ko Put On back to reflect on Pak Tuntung.

We could recall Ko Put On as a "bachelor" or "Ko," which refers to "brother" who never got married, but that status allows Put On to experience life from an un-familial perspective and in some ways allows him to go out and "integrate" – against the colonial state's policy of preventing Chinese from integrating with Indonesian society. Pak Tuntung, on the other hand, is a man with a family bounded by an expected lifestyle of a "bapak" (an attribute associated with the New Order of "*Pak* Harto"). As a bapak one could see Pak Tuntung as occupying a position of an observer experiencing everyday events not so much to adapt himself to them than to be amazed by what he sees. He is involved in many of the circumstances but he is also not quite part of them. On the other hand, we might also want to consider that when the Indo-Malay of "Pak," which refers to the figure of a "father," a "leader" or a "gentleman" is coupled with the Mandarin "Tung-Tung," the character could refer to the themes of adults reverting to childhood, of repression of growth, of continuing to live in an impossible world; of hope and dream of reconciliation of the two different worlds. In this sense, "Pak Tuntung" could also be said as stemming from and responding to the self-contradictory policy of Suharto's regime on ethnic Chinese which, while promoting assimilation, maintains ethnic Chinese as a separate community.[31]

Yet what is usually repressed has become a resource for resistance. With Pak Tuntung (and his appropriation of Master Q), we have an instance of transnational "regional collaboration" in both sustaining and challenging the political cultures of Suharto. Through the Hong Kong *Lau Fu Tze*, Basuki exploits from distance the conservatism of *Master Q* but injects it with themes of alienation, estrangement and reconciliation as a way to visualize the invisible effects of the repressive politics of the Indonesian state. At the same time, Basuki's appropriation of *Lao Fu Tze* also points to the three decades of the domination of Hong Kong's popular culture in the major cities of Indonesia.

So Basuki, as we have seen, constructs himself in and through *Lau Fu Tze* even as his own self-conception is subjected to the (geo)politics of the Indonesian state at the time. But we could imagine that his appropriation of *Lau Fu Tze* (instead of Ko Put On) is due to the death of Sino-Malay language after the

continuous series of reforms by the state. Basuki belongs to a different social formation where the language of *bahasa Indonesia* has become official. However, this perfection may have been seen as inadequate for Basuki to represent Pak Tuntung. Unlike Kho Wan Gie, Basuki confronts not only with what can be said, but also how to say it and with what kind of language. He seems to have decided not to give voice to his character, but his non-verbal imagery of estrangement in the figure of Pak Tuntung speaks in some ways of the silent language of the peranakan Chinese in the repressive regime of Suharto.

HONG KONG FILMS AND THE KUNG FU NOVELS OF KHO PING HOO

If Basuki embodies a particular peranakan Chinese who speaks about Indonesia through the visual language of Pak Tuntung that bears no trace of Chinese iconography, then in our second case, the master of kung fu novel, Asmaraman *S*. Kho Ping Hoo, represents yet another form of peranakan Chinese.[32] Unlike Basuki, Kho Ping Hoo seems to have less accessibility to Mandarin, yet most of his works are marked by a desire to represent Chinese culture as a kind of epic fantasy.[33]

Before we discuss Kho Ping Hoo, let me mention that Hong Kong films were enormously popular in the major cities of Indonesia, especially in the 1970s and the 1980s, even though Mandarin films were drastically cut year to year by the Indonesian government (which replaced them with American Hollywood films).[34] Despite this, the Indonesian state nevertheless allowed Hong Kong movies (in Mandarin Chinese with Indonesian subtitles) to be shown in local and national cinemas. At that time, in the city of Medan for instance, many people on the streets from different ethnic groups knew about Bruce Lee, and the film series, *Shao Lin Temple* (with stars like Fu Shen and Ti Lung) and later, the cool Chow Ren Fa, through his gangster films. I remember when videos entered my high school year in Surabaya in the 1980s, the TV dramas from Hong Kong (already dubbed in Mandarin with English subtitles) were immensely popular among both male and female Chinese and non-Chinese from various class groups. The series adapted from the kung fu (*wu xia*) novels of Chin Yung and Ku Lung were especially popular. This seems to confirm the study of Aimee Dawis who has provided us with various stories of the fascination of ethnic Chinese with kung fu films and videos, which she understood as offering the Chinese viewers, privately, with an "imagined security" in the time of public erasure of Chinese identity.[35]

It is a sort of paradox, then, that although Chinese script was forbidden in Indonesia (even in Chinese restaurants) and Chinese language was not allowed to be spoken publicly, we had Hong Kong movies in full-fledged

Mandarin. It seems to me that the politics of the state was to keep signs of Chinese away from the public sphere while tolerating images of "Chineseness" (in the form of kung fu and gangsters) in the mind of the public. So, the problem for the state leaders is always if the floating world of popular cultures cannot be fully suppressed, at least they can be allowed to circulate in a "non-threatening," if not stereotypical, form. And in the context of Suharto's Indonesia and as far as pop culture is concerned, the kung fu and the mafia films from Hong Kong are obviously a better choice than anything associated with Mao's red China (even though it is not clear what the difference between the kung fu from Hong Kong and that from the mainland would be). One possible answer to why this is possible, I believe, lies in the demonization or criminalization of communism by the Indonesian state which has allowed Chinese pop culture from non-communist Hong Kong and Taiwan to flourish in the (under)world of peranakan Indonesians.[36]

But kung fu films are not only about martial arts. Instead, the kung fu heroes are almost always positioned in a historical setting no matter how ahistorical that setting is. And the kung fu master almost always brings with him a moral philosophy no matter how problematic it is. But what is critical in the context of Indonesia is that these epic kung fu dramas in some way replaced the lessons in Chinese history that were largely missing at schools. Moreover, they encouraged further creation, especially of popular novels, many of which took up the theme of Chinese history and culture. So, in the 1970s and 1980s, youngsters like me often found ourselves spending our whole good afterschool day reading what was then known as "Cerita Silat" (or *Cersil*) kung fu novels in Indonesian[37] (Figure 3.4).

Of all the novelists who wrote for the market in the 1970s through the 1990s, none is more remarkable than Kho Ping Hoo (1926–1994), a *peranakan* Chinese who wrote over a hundred titles of historical kung fu novels with China as the setting and some titles using Javanese history (but I have not yet seen an episode with Communist China as a setting). To my knowledge, Kho Ping Hoo never visited China and he did not read or speak Chinese. His distance from Chinese texts had made him different from the previous generation of writers, who translated Chinese kung fu (*wu xia*) novels into Indonesian.[38] In this way, Kho Ping Hoo can be seen as quite original in his appropriation of the world of *wu xia*. Perhaps he only used his imagination, with the help of Hong Kong and Taiwan kung fu films, to produce an engaging series of kung fu novels flavoured with Confucian, Buddhist and Taoist philosophies (after every colossal battle and tragic death, every great reunion and fatal romance, readers are instructed with several pages of Taoist philosophy of eternal change). There are also local touches, too. In his novel we have the old "Suhu" (Teacher) or "Lao Chien Pei" (Grand Master) with Chinese names fighting and flying alongside his or her brother "Suheng" and

Figure 3.4 ***Bangau Merah*** **(The Red Crane) by Asmaraman S. Kho Ping Hoo, 1980s**. Top: The famous Hong Kong *Old Master Q* (*Lau Fu Tze*) (courtesy of the author).

sister "Sumoi" with Indic Malay names (such as Shinta Dewi). But, again, what is most interesting is that for many Indonesians who were born into and grown up in the social environment of Suharto, his work became one of the most imaginative educational sources of Chinese history, culture and religion.

In some ways, perhaps we experienced (in a far less conscious way) something like the late colonial era when the sense of normality was made to rule,[39] for the *cerita silat* of Kho Ping Hoo too proliferated in the Suharto's time of "order and peace." The flying hero from mount Kun Lung works like

the forbidden character of Tan Malaka/Patjar Merah (in the dime novels of the late 1930s) who alone is able to understand and resolve the situation to the suspense and satisfaction of the audience "out there."[40] The Chinese hero too is undetectable by authorities and moves around in unusual places undergoing the state of political intrigue, war and conflict. Though Kho Ping Hoo's novel is written in "proper" bahasa Indonesia, the story itself conjures up many escape fantasies that allow readers to escape from "home" in order to be free and uncontainable by authorities, just like the Chinese heroes in the novel. In this sense, the formation of Sino-Indonesian pop cultures could be seen as bespeaking an unrepresented amnesia which demands representation. To come to terms with the cultural policy of the nation-state and to cope with the desire for and a rejection of Chinese cultures, the Sino-Indonesian artists appropriate various aspects of Chinese popular cultures (from Hong Kong) and refashion them for the consumption of Indonesian public. In this sense, the cultural policy of the nation-state to "erase" Chinese cultures has ironically contributed to the uncanny appearance of imagined memory that it wished to displace.

CONCLUSION

The works of Kho Ping Hoo and Basuki were created in the era of Suharto's policy of erasing Chinese cultures, which the regime problematically considered as "different" from Indonesian cultures even though aspects of the latter have been intimately formed by the former. Their works can be seen as an effort to come up with a form of representation that seeks to work both with and against the grain of the official image of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. Their efforts recall those of Kho Wan Gie and the Sino-Malay writers who took a path leading to the recognition of ethnic Chinese identities as an inseparable part of Indonesian identity that the colonial state tried to negate. Through the control of lingua franca, the colonial state tried to separate ethnic Chinese from Indonesians and it was just at this moment that peranakan Chinese were showing that Indonesia was basically formed by appropriation of various sources and it embodied foreignness as part of its essential quality as exemplified in the discourses of "Sino-Malay." Kho Ping Ho and Basuki, on their part, deal with the postcolonial state by continuing the practice of appropriation of and collaboration with popular cultures from East Asia as a way to cope with the state's erasure of Chinese cultures from the public life of Indonesia. It seems to me this collaboration has aided the "implicit duel" between the state and the ethnic Chinese in the New Order, the history that recalls the earlier struggles under Dutch colonial rule.

In the end, what is perhaps more important is that this recent duel, conducted through the reworking of Hong Kong popular culture has contributed

to the remaking of the ethnic Chinese identity in Post-Suharto Indonesia. Perhaps it is within this context of earlier formations of Chinese cultures being associated with kung fu and gangsters that we can begin to understand the very different reception that the East Asian pop cultures receive today. Assessing the value of the popular Taiwanese teenage drama *Meteor Garden* in 2006, a non-Chinese fan says:

> A film like *Meteor Garden* has made the image of China (mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan) looks more "humanistic." Chinese people are like us and everyone else. In their everyday life they have also encountered problems that we all have, such as the complexity of friendship, love and economic difficulties. In fact, the world of Chinese kung fu only appears in films.[41]

This is a comment from someone of my generation who perhaps also came to understand Chinese culture and history through the kung fu films and, within this context, he found the Cinderella story of *Meteor Garden* so much more real, distinctively and identifiably human (regardless of how unreal the drama is in the eyes of its critics). No matter how casual this comment is, it indicates to us that the East Asian drama today has become something capable of being consciously aspired to by all Indonesians, due, in no small measure, to the saturation of kung fu images presented from early on by and for the ethnic Chinese communities. The popularity of East Asian drama in Indonesia today can therefore be seen as owing much to the reverse-image produced earlier for and by the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia.

Finally, let me say that under the current post-Suharto neoliberal democratic regime of Indonesia, Asian pop has been prospering, probably happy that the peranakan Chinese opened up a space for the current post-kung fu Asian TV dramas to appear new, more diverse and more "humanistic." There is no suppression of any Asian pop cultures in Indonesia today. One can even find an Indonesian translation of Sinchan in the children section of local and national bookstores. Asian pop culture is also more welcome everywhere today and is more diverse. Yet, what one does not yet find is the pop culture that tries to engage critically or satirically with the power relations in the region – for instance, the geopolitical economy of Asia today, or the behaviour of local and trans-local Chinese, Taiwanese, Koreans and Japanese bosses in Indonesian factories. These things perhaps demand different creativity.

NOTES

1. I remember hearing a singing beggar in a bus in Jakarta uttering "tau-ming-se," "tau-ming-se," as he squeezed into the crowded aisle. Later I realized that "tau-ming-se" here referred to the Indonesian expression, "Please step aside" (***tau****long* ***ming****gir*

***si**dikit*). Apparently the Taiwanese pop star has entered into the creative imagination of Jakarta street singers.

2. Dawis, 2010, Orang Indonesia: 128.

3. An officer in charge of importing Mandarin films in the 1970s was quoted as saying: "The problem of importing Mandarin films, from the perspective of Indonesia, could possibly produce adverse influences on the country's culture and politics. It certainly has an influence on Indonesian film industry." Quoted in *Cinemart*, January, 1975: 34–35 as cited in Teo, "The 1970s" note 6: 109.

4. Dawis, 2010.

5. Heryanto, "Ethnic Identities."

6. Stories of communism, of Chinese nanny and maid, of single woman or single mother and of homosexuality, for instances remain unexplored subjects even though one could argue, they too could be part of Chinese, and thus Indonesian, cultures.

7. I also put aside other influential transnational cultural flows, such as those from India and the Islamic networks. For a recent work on popular cultures in Indonesia, see: Heryanto (ed.), *Popular Culture in Indonesia*.

8. Suryadinata, "The 1911 Revolution."

9. Despite not being left alone, many "Indies Chinese" were greatly influenced by the rich diversity of the Chinese, Hindu-Javanese and Muslim cultures. We could compare the identity formation of Indies Chinese with that of their "neighbours" in Malaysia and Singapore, for instance, where the ethnic Chinese have identified and reinvented themselves as "indigenous" (such as the Baba Nyonya). I want to thank Lakhbir Jassal for pointing this out.

10. This "confusion" is best conveyed in the eighteenth-century vernacular Javanese slang as *"Cino wurung, Jowo tanggung, Londo pun durung"* (no-longer Chinese, not-quite Javanese and not-yet Dutch).

11. Skinner, "Creolized Chinese," 51.

12. Siegel, *Fetish, Recogniztion, Revolution*, 116.

13. Shiraishi, *The Age in Motion.*

14. Lohanda, *Growing Pains.*

15. Shiraishi, "Anti-sinicism."

16. Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*, 116.

17. To undermine the legibility of Sino-Malay, the colonial state drew a boundary between its version of Indonesian language and what is not (Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*). The colonial tool of "proper" Malay was deployed as a way to project onto Sino-Malay a status of the language as "improper" and even "alien." In the light of "official Indonesia" to be guarded in its language propriety, Sino-Malay became a threat that ought to be externalized. The colonial state involvement in the contested zone of public sphere thus has produced the category of the "popular," the "lower" and by extension, the "alien" for Sino-Malay.

18. One of the most celebrated productions of Sino-Malay is the "documentary" writings of Kwee, *Tjamboek Berdoeri*; and Kwee, *Menjadi Tjamboek Berdoeri.*

19. The comic strip of *Ko Put On* drawn by Kho Wan Gie, who was born in 1908 in Indramayu, a regency on the north coast of West Java, was identified as the first comic strip in Indonesia by an Indonesian. The immensely popular comic strip Ko Put On that ran from 1930 to 1942 (and from 1946 to 1965) represents an attempt of

Chinese Indonesian to find a place in the colonial and postcolonial Indonesia before the Suharto regime. See Myra Sidharta, "Jakarta"; See also Atmowiloto, "Mengenang Kho Wan Gie."

20 Sidharta, "Jakarta"; Atmowiloto, "Mengenang Kho Wan Gie."

21. Atmowiloto, "Mengenang Kho Wan Gie."

22. Sidharta, "Jakarta."

23. Suryadinata, *Chinese Indonesians;* Heryanto, "Ethnic Identities."

24. The original artist Hu Wei Tien has left *Analisa* in 2006 and stopped drawing for the newspaper, but the media, holding the copyright, continues to produce Pak Tuntung under a different artist whose name is only known as Herman. For reasons that do not need to detain us, the current artist, nevertheless, is able to emulate the basic characteristic of the original "Pak Tuntung," even though, in the eyes of fans, he seems to have failed to maintain the stylistic expression of the original. Fans of Pak Tuntung have noticed the difference although in their eyes "Pak Tuntung will always be my favorite hometown cartoon." A fan posted a message to his/her friend: "Today, I spotted a difference. The cartoon doesn't look as original as it used to be. Maybe the original cartoonist is sick, or has retired. I dunno. And today's Pak Tuntung looks weird to me. The original one looks cuter and funnier. Hopefully the original cartoonist will come back and draw more, or the new cartoonist can improve his/her work and bring back the originality." http://ocpuso.mysclass.com/200604/05/pak-tuntung/ Retrieved November 28, 2008. Regardless of the question of authenticity, the character of Pak Tuntung at least remains that of the original.

25. Seno, "Dunia Kartunis." *Analisa* is known as a newspaper for ethnic Chinese for it is the main site for ethnic Chinese's obituaries.

26. Hu Wei Tien is married to my mother's half-sister. As a little boy in Medan, I often saw him drawing Pak Tuntung, and was always amazed by his drawing skill.

27. The same clothing might just well be an aesthetic technique of making the character recognizable, regardless of the changing of time. An interpretation, however, could be made that the fixity of the fashion code is due to the identity of the cartoonist who prefer a style that transcends politics of identification.

28. Basuki indicates that he read Master Q since he was a boy because his father often bought him one. He collected them, as I saw boxes of Master Q under his bed. See also Nasution, "Tertawa bersama."

29. Ardiansyah, "Pak Tuntung."

30. The term "infantile subject" is from Berlant, "Theory of Infantile Citizenship."

31. Suryadinata, *Chinese Indonesians.*

32. Suryadinata, *Prominent Indonesian Chinese*: 161–62; TokohIndonesia.com, "Kho Ping Hoo."

33. Suryadinata, "Postwar Kungfu."

34. Stephen Teo reported that in 1973, Indonesian government "cut imports from 300 in the previous years to 100. In 1974, this was further reduced to only 90 films and worsened towards the late 1970s." See: Teo (2002: 93).

35. Dawis, *The Chinese of Indonesia.*

36. In Medan, in the 1970s and 1980s, there were still Chinese book rental stores in many markets close to Chinese neighbourhood. Books, magazines and comics from Hong Kong could be easily found there.

37. Kungfu novels have quite a long history in Indonesia, going back to pre-war time when many Chinese Wu Shia Xiaoshuo were translated into Sino-Malay language. See: Suryadinata, "Post-War Kungfu Novels."
38. Suryadinata, "Post-War Kungfu Novels."
39. Shiraishi, "Digul."
40. Oshikawa, "Patjar Merah"; Siegel, Fetish, chap. 7.
41. Muhammad Firdiansyah, as cited in Junaidi, "Film Mandarin."

Chapter 4

The Film *Gie*

> The figure of Soe Hok Gie [1942–1969] symbolizes the struggle of our young generation against undemocratic regimes. Gie is remembered as a nature lover . . . and he became famous through his diary published [in 1983] as *The Diary of a Demonstrator*. He is known by both the generation of '66 and individuals of today via a feature film titled *Gie.* The film has successfully promoted Soe Hok Gie and popularized his diary. Thirty five years after his death, the spirit of his struggle seems to have returned. Metro TV voted him one of the ten most popular [almost all male] ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. No doubt, Gie represents the spirit of the youth, the rebel and the intelligent young man.[1]

So wrote the authors of a book titled, *The Ten Most Popular Prominent Indonesian Chinese*. Based on a poll by a private TV programme, the authors with some urgency introduced Soe Hok Gie who, compared to other winners, had not been known to many Indonesians until the release of the popular film *Gie*.[2]

In the year 2005, *Gie* directed by Riri Riza received numerous awards at the Indonesian Film Festival along with other international praises, all of which continued well after the initial release.[3] The narrative of the film is structured stylistically in ways that follow the diary. And while Gie is portrayed as narrating his own life, the film is clearly framed by the urgency of the present to construct a new kind of hero. As Riri points out:

> Many young people are only taught about celebrated national heroes, like Ki Hajar Dewantara and Sultan Hassanudin. . . . In fact, there are people like Soe Hok Gie, whose status was not lifted by the government, although he played a significant role in history. Hok Gie was a unique fighter and a clean activist.[4]

The director has also made it clear that "my original intention was just simple: I only wanted to tell the story of someone that we believe must be told to the broader public, particularly the younger generations."[5] In short, the film attempts to depict the short lived life of Gie by focusing on his "heroism," which the director believes the post-*reformasi* (reformation) peoples of Indonesia, especially the "youth," ought to remember.

Like many Indonesians born after 1965, I knew nothing of Soe Hok Gie until recently. He did not exist in our school texts, nor had I heard of him from family members or friends. This is perhaps not surprising for a depoliticized generation that lived under Suharto's New Order (1966–1998). Gie's absence from the pedagogical apparatus of our social surrounding may be attributed to his status as a student demonstrator who worked actively against the political establishment. His activist profile would have never been accepted by an authoritarian state even though the demonstration in which he participated helped Suharto gain power. Under a regime obsessed with order and stability, a figure like Gie would have been a threat and thus best forgotten.

Another potential reason for Gie's erasure from the national memory of the Suharto generation may well be that he was very young when he died, too young perhaps for the narrative of Indonesian historiography. As a commentator notes, "His achievement and impact are difficult to assess."[6] Furthermore, a young person would normally never be considered a hero. In Indonesia, it is generally known that the notion of heroes connotes seniority, along with gendered boundaries (which largely excludes females from becoming leading figures of remembered heroism). Young heroes may however exist but they are often seen in terms of a type, a model or a phenomenon that carries very little individuality.[7]

Despite the youth factor, a very strong reason for Gie's invisibility may be attributed to his ethnic background. Under the sociopolitical environment of the Suharto regime, people of Chinese descent such as Gie were far from the national hero type. For these reasons it is not surprising that all through the Suharto years Gie stood outside the national memory. A film centred on Gie as a hero seems possible only retrospectively – in the post-Suharto era when the boundaries of heroic knowledge have been challenged.[8]

For members of the post-Suharto generation, the retrieval of this figure serves various purposes. It allows people to come to terms with the guilt of past ignorance and the responsibility to create a new subjectivity for the present and future generations. For instance, Mira Lesmana, the producer, recalls her initial response to Gie's diary (first published in 1983). The book, she said, made her feel shameful of her generation who according to her is not even aware of the historical conditions of the 1960s. The diary has apparently transformed her. "I still remember, every time I opened a page I felt ashamed of myself. What Gie did was extraordinary. At the age of 14 he was already

a keen reader of history and literature. This person whom I had never known has made me feel proud as an Indonesian. My intellectual horizon (*cakrawala berpikir*) has been opened (by Gie's diary)."[9] For Mira Lesmana the diary, which she then helped turn into a film, is inspirational for it woke her up from her teenage world (*masa remaja*). With Riri Riza, the director and writer of the film, Mira reinterpreted the figure of Gie after a series of interviews and research.[10] What was at stake for them was not the truth about Gie, but that he should serve as a new model for an Indonesian hero. Riri Riza makes clear that his intention in making a film about Gie is to provide Indonesian youth today with a role model:

> We're not trying to reconstruct his life. [Instead] we're trying to deconstruct it. We will view him with contemporary eyes and hope that today's generation will be able to digest his message. . . . I really want people of the same age as me, or younger, to know about Soe Hok Gie. Some of us may not realize that a young person, who enjoyed rock music and mountaineering – who was humorous and so easygoing – played a role in the growth of democracy in the country.[11]

Riri believes that "cinema is the most effective means for capturing human emotion. It has the capacity to express reality in three dimensions, both visual and aural. But such capacity makes sense only when the film carries a strong message."[12] For Riri, Gie carries an exceptionally powerful message for the Indonesian youth. "Gie is not the stereotypical *role model* or hero that we have known in this country. He sided with the weak and the defeated for perhaps he wanted to remain a hero for those who have fallen, and (moreover) he died young."[13] Gie represents not only the forgotten generation of Indonesian students who pushed for democracy in the 1960s. More importantly, he embodies a new subjectivity, a "role model" for the present generation. For Riri, to construct a new model of an Indonesian hero means to overcome the visual regime of the Suharto era in which a hero is marked by what Indonesian film scholar Intan Paramaditha calls "the cult of Generals" – a product of the upper class *priyayi* (traditional bureaucratic elite) values and militarism constituting a dominant model of masculinity.[14] It is against the visual regime of the New Order that the cinematic form of *Gie* emerges as a strategic intervention. Gie is represented by members of the generation who appropriate him to resolve the contradiction of their own time. As Paramaditha points out, "Riri's politics [of masculinity] shape the imagined Gie on screen."[15] Gie thus is a work of both autobiographical truth and political imagination.

The film, while based on a diary, represents the desire of the filmmaker and his wish to create a new historical subjectivity. In this sense, the biographic representation of Gie produces a politics that argues for change, but such a change, as I will suggest, demands a performance that is embedded within

the larger regime of "modelling" or "role playing" in Indonesian society. The demand raises the question of how a film dealing with sensitive postwar historical issues could escape from the perennial question of how to represent a Chinese Indonesian as a hero. This chapter discusses the problematics of portraying and representing "Chinese" identity as part of the national hero construction of Gie. I look at how the film *Gie* both defies and supports the constructed boundary that defines Chinese identity and how it opens up a space for everyone to become national heroes of today. I tease out some scenes in the film and situate them within the effort to open up a new form of representation in the cultural field of post-Suharto Indonesia. But first, what might have been the main filmic intervention of *Gie*?

A NEW SUBJECTIVITY AND FILMIC RESPONSE TO SOCIAL CHANGE

In an insightful analysis of *Gie*, Intan Paramaditha underscores the attempt by Riri Riza to revise the masculine norm of the Suharto era, namely *bapakism*, which refers to "an adult male . . . a father, a married man, and a man of a higher position endowed with wisdom, charisma, power, family values, and self mastery," all sustained by the *ibu* (the Mrs.) and their children under the benevolent gaze of the state.[16] The ultimate manifestation of *bapakism* is the Indonesian hero of the New Order, ideally an anti-communist man in military uniform, a figure constituting "the dominant model of masculinity." *Gie* questions precisely this visual and social regime, and Riri uses Gie as a counter figure to the monumentality of the Generals. Paramaditha identifies several tropes used by Riri to challenge the dominant model of masculinity. First, Gie is an intellectual, a man of letters who could hardly fight and barely attach himself to political power. Second, he remains single and, in Paramaditha's words, "unproductive" within the establishment of the New Order masculine norm. Third, Gie is a Chinese Indonesian, known widely as the "other" of the nation-state although he is of an "unusual" type outside the sphere of the business world with which the Chinese have often been associated. With this series of unlikely-hero tropes, a new face of manhood is constructed, one that is "sensitive, fragile and often indecisive," a type that Riri recognizes in actors such as Jude Law.[17] The reconfiguration of the typical Indonesian hero takes the route of transnational "mediascape," thus rupturing the discourse of origin, bequests and inheritance central to the reproduction of the national hero in the Suharto era. The figure of Gie, Paramaditha concludes, offers "a different kind of heroism complicated by anxiety, uncertainty, and impotence" and such representation has helped undermine the patriarchal structure of the New Order.[18]

Paramaditha's valuable study encourages us to view the film *Gie* as representing a new generation of filmmakers undergoing a period of sociopolitical "transition" known otherwise as post-Suharto *reformasi*. For this new generation the uncertainty of the present echoes the historical time of Soe Hok Gie. Gie is a phenomenal figure conceivable only in the era of transition (*zaman peralihan*).[19] Riri seems to be aware of the similarity of his time with that of Gie, and he expresses the temporal convergence in various cinematic forms. For example, the student demonstrations that took place on the streets in the mid-1960s recall similar demonstrations during Riri's own youthful time in the late 1990s. The political mood of the two different times seems unchanged, or better, interchanged, as Indonesia's political trajectory remains in the hands of political parties that show no interest in improving people's livelihood.[20]

Riri portrays Gie as dealing with the historical sensitivities of the "transition" period – sensitivities that are not dissimilar to those in his own (present) time. In this sense, *Gie* could be seen as making an intervention for change in societal awareness of the "history of the present." It takes the form of historical if not nostalgic remembrance of the past by those who have never experienced any of that past. For Riri, Gie is meant to inspire the Indonesian youth to reclaim their position in the political history of Indonesia. Released in 2005 at a time when Indonesians were defined more by the disillusionment of Indonesian politics, *Gie* could be seen in terms of a filmic response to the present urge for a new historical subjectivity. Although Indonesians elected Bambang Susilo Yudhoyono as President just a year before *Gie* was released, it remains uncertain if the incumbent government formed by the old guards could constitute new historical subjectivities. Critical of today's social formation, *Gie* cannot be said to campaign for the ideological present. Instead it occupies a relatively independent position in its effort to reconstruct an Indonesian young heroic subjectivity even though this position does not necessarily stand outside the social order within which Riri and his film are embedded.

The theme of the student/youth as a site for the recuperation of historical subjectivity is indeed familiar to Indonesian culture, society and history, and when student demonstration against the state is played out in Indonesian film, it raises the question of where the student is located in the recognized trope of Indonesian film.

THE YOUTH AND THE MORAL NATION

In his study of Indonesian film, Karl Heider writes that "Indonesian movies do not have bad guys. The Indonesian figures create disorder, confusion, chaos. They have done something wrong, bad, evil. But they are not inherently bad.

We can best label them 'agents of disorder.' They can be converted and order can be restored."[21] Heider's study of the "pattern of Indonesian culture in cinema" emphasizes the idea of "order and disorder" as a key to Indonesian life. Cinema, as part of Indonesian life, replays such a pattern that is, we must add, not only cultural but also political. The idea of order and disorder is central to the constitution of the national culture. While the maintenance of order and disorder is significant, Heider continues, what is even more important is the dissolution of their difference and restoration of the order.[22] The incorporation of disorder into order indicates the capacity of the state (as the custodian of order) to moderate if not dissolve opposition altogether.

Heider's formulation encourages us to move beyond his analytical concern. Take, as in our case, the complex position of university students in the history of modern Indonesia. University students (*mahasiswa/i*) occupy a problematic "middle space" somewhere between order and disorder. The *mahasiswa* occupy a *liminal* position, for in the social hierarchy of Indonesia they are considered adults-but-not-quite.[23] For sure they are no longer teenagers (*remaja* – the favourite theme of the New Order) but in many respects they are still dependent on the authority of their parents or the elders of the family. They are adults by legal definition but most are unlikely to have formed families of their own. In this limbo position, they are often seen as floating subjects struggling with their sociopolitical and sexual ambiguities. Nevertheless, they are the future perfect of the nation, one that will replace the old national subjects, for better or worse.

Situated at the threshold of time and space, university students are the generator of political change while at the same time serving as a vehicle for the formation of new power. They represent both the sentimental youth (who often invite some disciplining measure from the family and the state) and the uncompromising heroic fighters who struggle against the family and behind it the corrupted nation. In this way, the *mahasiswa* embody most strategically the concern in Indonesia over order and disorder. In some ways, the *mahasiswa* are expected to create some disorder even though such move is meant for order to be restored. Indeed they are often responsible for creating disorder but they too are the agents who will ultimately recuperate the (unfolding) order. This dual role makes the *mahasiswa* both a vulnerable and a threatening subject to the order of the nation. In this position they often emerge as the moral compass of the nation.

Soe Hok Gie plays precisely this role of the moral compass, as may be discerned in the filmic representation of his personality. The observant male character is set against the instability of the transition period. While he is filled with anxiety and self-doubt (more explicitly expressed in his diary), Gie is portrayed in the film as a type of leader who is low keyed, relatively stable and gentle (especially in comparison with his friends, as I will discuss later).

Cinematically, Gie (especially the adult Gie) shows consistent calmness despite the anxiety and rage one could feel from reading his diary. In the film (unlike the diary), Gie appears firm, recalling, I would suggest, the imagery of *halus* (refinement) which points to the superiority of the moral over the political – a quality that makes Gie untouchable by opportunistic power. The issue of the possibility and impossibility of the students being co-opted by power is indeed a central theme in the film. Gie confronts Indonesian politics on moralistic grounds. In Riri's words: "The spirit of this film is how to arouse many people with the story of a young man that is continuously in search of a way to remain honest and consistently reject any effort to draw or persuade him to enter a particular circle. He believes that it is truth and humanity that must be defended."[24] In this sense, one could argue that, through *Gie*, Riri formulates a moral (instead of a political) discourse as a terrain for the *mahasiswa* to engage in social change.[25] One could say that this form of Indonesian humanism poses a limit for Riri's filmic intervention in Indonesian society.

However, for Riri, the championing of the moral over the political is meant to overcome the image of the *mahasiswa* as a mindless crowd of demonstrators easily harnessed by political powers. Riri Riza intends to show Soe Hok Gie as the embodiment of an ideal *mahasiswa* who is able to gain autonomy in the uncertainty of the "transition" era within which he is embedded. The domain of morality is needed to fight against the opportunistic interests of political parties. Gie's commitment to uphold morality above politics makes him immune to cooptation by political parties. Gie continues to be critical of the political power to the end of his short life. He plays a leading role in student demonstrations that help to overthrow Sukarno and give rise to the Suharto regime. He is, however, also disillusioned by the New Order's violent normality, which prompts him to continue writing critical commentaries.

By making a postwar historical drama, Riri Reza has helped lead Indonesian cinema out of the Suharto era, where the figure of youth was commonly depicted as lacking meaningful agency outside the custody of the family and the state. By visualizing Gie as a young middle-class student hero, Riri dispels the image of youth crisis often projected in the New Order *remaja* (teen) films.[26] Through Gie, Riri dissociates students from the nihilistic, violent and hysterical characters commonly associated with them. This is already an iconoclastic move, one that seeks to constitute a new subjectivity for Indonesian youth. He recuperates the feature of a young man who seeks to align himself with the people (*rakyat*), instead of with his family and the state.

The film thus moves beyond a mere critique of the visual order of the Suharto regime. Gie may be less of an action hero, but he spends a lot of energy thinking about why his Indonesia has been defeated and his dream for a just and more egalitarian society under the care of an honest government has never come true. By defining Gie as a model for a national hero with agency

outside the state and the family, the path would perhaps be clear for future counter-hegemonic subjectivity.[27]

Yet as I have indicated above, the recuperation of the ideal youth rests on the construction of Gie as a moral subject who is able to transcend the domain of political interests. With the objective of investing the *mahasiswa* with new historical agency, the film *Gie* relies on the crisis of Indonesian politics, but the crisis does not seem to constitute a psychological trauma for Gie. Instead, the film follows a trait of the life of an idealist student whose socio-political consciousness develops in tandem with his encounter with contradictions in the urban environment where he lives.

POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND SCENES ON THE STREET

As described above, university students occupy a liminal position in the order of Indonesian society and thus it is acceptable that they question authority for it is also through them that order can be recuperated. As if responding to this social formation, Gie is depicted in the film as a rebellious youth who grows up against the authority of the school and later on the state. The failure of education or the insufficiency of the pedagogical institution in providing education is vividly depicted in a series of incidents in the classroom. The young Gie occasionally argues with his teacher. He is seen reading books beyond those assigned by the school. At the university, his extracurricular activities include watching avant-garde films that offer him more satisfaction than the formal education he receives. Gie is a product of forces outside the order of conventional institutions, and he challenges them in various aspects of his life. His political consciousness evolves outside institutions and often on the street.

The first entry of his diary, dated March 4, 1957, is taken by the film as the moment for the emergence of Gie's critical consciousness. Leaving the school compound, the young Gie narrates the following inside a tram:

> Today is the day when grudge has hardened. My grade for geography was 8 but three points were cut so I ended up only getting 5. I am not happy with that. I am upset because I received the third highest scores in that exam. I believe that at least I am the smartest in geography. I kept my grudge, which has now gone down to my heart and hardened as stone. The exam paper I threw away. Let me be punished. I have never failed an exam.[28]

Gie's grade was lowered by a teacher with whom he has an intellectual argument in class, a downgrade he regards as unfair punishment for daring to be vocal with his views. Angered by what he perceives as unfair treatment, Gie, accompanied by Han, his best friend, trails the teacher home one day with

the intention of seeking revenge. Han picks up a piece of wood that he plans to use to beat up the teacher. Gie and Han follow the teacher from the city to the shanties of Jakarta in the 1950s, and are stunned by the squalor of the teacher's living environment. They soften upon sighting this, as well as the presence of the teacher's wife and two small children. The scene of poverty they encounter overcomes their rage and the young Gie is awakened to the power of humanity inside him.

The aforementioned scene is just the beginning of young Gie's awakening, for he soon encounters another scene on the street which adds to his awareness of the profound inequality and injustices of his time. In the early 1960s, as Sukarno is building modernist monuments in Jakarta, Gie encounters a dishevelled man hungrily eating discarded mango skin retrieved from a trash can, as if he had not eaten for days. As the man ravishes the food he found, the grand limousine chauffeuring President Sukarno passes by. The contrast of these two images vividly captures the condition of the time against which Gie is to fight for years to come. In the film the starving man appears well-dressed. He is apparently someone who has fallen into poverty and destitution because of the rapid economic downturn of the country. The image of the man eating mango peels from the garbage bin is irreconcilable with the image of Sukarno being driven in a limousine towards his presidential palace. This scene which the young Gie witnesses shows the contradiction of the time, recalling the image of the proximity between the poor *kampung* (urban village) and the presidential palace in the satirical *Tales from Jakarta* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer. In the 1960s the street bears witness to scenes of class conflict which in turn unsettle Gie. Everything falls apart in the Sukarno era and the nation is in a state of ruin. Poverty and injustices prevail, yet ceremonies and parties continue at the presidential palace. Such bitter realism disappears as the film progresses into the era of the New Order when normal life prevails but at once concealing the unprecedented violence of the Suharto regime.

The scenes on the street register the idea that Gie is basically a product of social contradiction outside the sphere of institutions. His political consciousness, as portrayed by Riri, takes shape on the street outside the school and the family. The film makes no effort to link the development of Gie's new subjectivity with his family upbringing. This stems from Riri Riza's own take on his hero. Riri does not consider ethnicity, religion and regional cultures (or the sphere of the family) as central to understanding the motivations of Gie's life. As I will discuss in the next section, the director constructs Gie as a "universal" Indonesian subject as if only then can Indonesian viewers recognize and identify with him. As such, the circumstance of Gie as Chinese is not an issue for Riri even though the 1960s was an era marked by the "national" question about the place of the Chinese, as the internal outsider, in Indonesia. In the following section, I show how the historical subjectivity of Gie as Chinese is

formulated in cinematic form and how the film reveals the threat to and the recuperation of that subjectivity.

THE FAMILY AND THE RECONFIGURATION OF THE CHINESE

There was probably no ethnic group in postcolonial Indonesia that was more insecure about the question of identity than the Chinese, given the country's history of violence (both direct and indirect) against them. *Gie*, however, is not intended to be a film about ethnic Chinese, even though it helps recuperate the history of ethnic Chinese as nationalists.[29] Indeed what has made *Gie* an important film is the effort it makes to recognize Chinese Indonesians as contributing to the narrative of national "heroism." Nonetheless, the film confronts with the social field in which the idea of the Chinese as national heroes is not something Indonesia seems completely ready for, even though Chinese Indonesian films are becoming a popular genre.[30]

The film demands that Gie becomes a role model for Indonesian students, but Gie is also a Chinese. To resolve this "contradiction," Riri Riza takes the trajectory of not allowing Gie to be seen as a product of "Chinese culture" – whatever this might mean. Instead he shows the gap between Gie's ethnic world and his new political subjectivity, leaving the difference irreconcilable. The resolution to this "internal war" is the overcoming of ethnic identity. This transposition is expressed in the film through the "unspoken" enmity between Gie and members of his family.

In both the diary and the film, family support is not portrayed as foundational for the development of Gie as a student leader. The diary starts with a statement that makes no reference to parents or any other member of the family. Instead Gie situates himself in the larger events of the world before providing a report on the progress he has made at school.

> I was born on December 17, 1942 when war was engulfing the Pacific. When I was five years old, I entered Sin Hwa School [a school specifically for ethnic Chinese]. In just two years, I moved to Gang Komandan. I was moved up immediately from grade two to grade three and then to grade four to test my capacity for that level. On December 1, 1954, I moved to Jalan Pembangunan. I received 8 for mathematics, 8 for language (*bahasa)* and 9 for general (social) studies (*pengetahuan umum*). I was expecting 7-7-10 for the respective subjects. Finally, with extra credits, I received 9-9-9. In the Strada middle school, I moved up from grade one to two. My average grade for the first semester was 5.5; second semester 6; and the third semester 7.[31]

Although the film opens with the image of Gie's family, it shows the absence of communication between the members. The mother's voice is constantly

heard but the father oddly never utters a word throughout the film. The mother (Nio Hoei An) appears out of place, identifying with none of her sons' activities especially those outside the home. The relationship between mother and sons is often marked by frustration, as expressed in the following dialogue: "*Gie untuk apa semuanya ini?*" (Gie, what is all this activism for?), and Gie to his mother: "*Ah mama tidak mengerti*" (Oh mother, you just don't understand). Gie's father (Soe Li Piet/Salam Sutrawan) was a writer for the pre-war Chinese press, but is portrayed as losing his capacity to write and he thus remains speechless for the duration of the film in what seems to be an alienated world of post-Independence Indonesia. Li Piet is neither authoritative nor benevolent and he stays mostly at home observing his gold fish and other pets.

The only exchange between father and son in the film is in the form of Gie showing his diary to his father. This can be seen as a tribute of filial piety to his father who, during the pre-War years, was also a writer. However, this act of dedication could also be seen as a registration of Gie's new subjectivity which demands acknowledgement from his father who is shown (via his clothing) as still belonging to the realm of Chinese culture. Gie could be seen as repressing Chinese culture so that he could become part of a larger network of belonging in which writing serves a larger Indonesian audience, unlike his father who wrote only for the Sino-Malay press. With the end of the Sino-Malay press, his father spends a great deal of time observing his pets, as they perhaps represent a form of stillness in time, one which was apolitical.

As with his brother (the respected sociologist, Soe Hok Djin/Arif Budiman), Gie is portrayed as different. Several scenes in the film show how they leave the house together for school. Upon stepping outside, they will stop and turn to look at each other before walking in opposite directions. The mutual look between the boys shows only enmity. We get a sense that Gie, unlike his "academic" brother, prefers a different route, one that is closer to the street.

Riri represents the family as irrelevant to the development of Gie's political consciousness. Members of his family appear to contribute little to the development of his intellectual life. Gie is portrayed as a rebellious type who will stand his ground and argue his case. In one scene, he has to be dragged away by his family while trying to rescue Han, his friend, from his abusing aunt. Gie is portrayed as someone who is ahead of his family. In this sense, Riri is determined that the Chinese family can never be part of Gie's political consciousness or become the basis for the constitution of the Indonesian heroic story.

WOMEN AND THE COMMUNIST FIGURE

Although "Chinese" is an irrelevant theme for Riri Riza, the film's basic choice of the central conflict between *mahasiswa* and the political regime in

the 1960s means that it cannot avoid the issues of the Chinese and communism. Tan Tjin Han, the best boyhood friend of Gie (who is not in the diary) is represented as a Chinese youth that goes awry. Han grows up to believe in the vision of the PKI (the Indonesian Communist Party), where he works as a serviceman. The adult Han's house is shown as keeping a Chinese ancestral altar (the central icon of Chinese culture), under which he hides the attires of the PKI during the turmoil of 1965–1966. Han is rounded up one night and subsequently executed in an unknown place. In this regard, Han (unlike Gie) is associated with the Chinese and the communist, while the mutilation of Han's body is seen as a result of Han's own recklessness and embeddedness in Chinese identity and ultimately his incapacity to stay away from the political game (*permainan politik*) of the time. By contrast, Gie carries the extraordinary virtue of his type who is capable of overcoming his Chineseness to become a "universal" subject and thus survives the time of turmoil.

The tragic fate of Han indicates the problem of bringing the Chinese and the political together. Gie on the other hand is able to separate the two worlds. In portraying social change through the contrast of Gie and Han, Riri represents the image of an ideal youth who poses as a "universal" Indonesian subject that carries no ethnic and regional identities. "Chinese" is an ambiguous figure in the Indonesian life, but the film resolves that ambiguity by way of championing Gie (for being a universal subject) and decapitating Han (for being a Chinese and a communist). In this sense, *Gie* does not reconfigure the role of Chinese in Indonesian history. Instead it remains squarely within the dominant perception of the opposition between the Chinese and the political, of how one cannot be political and at once Chinese. In this sense, we can say that *Gie* remains in the problematic of the national culture, which tolerates the moral Chinese but not the political Chinese.

Gie is an ambitious film that tries to reposition the historical Gie as a "non-action" hero who nonetheless remains an unwavering figure as if he represents a new beginning for Indonesia. In this attempt, the figure of "Chinese" and "women" belong to the realm beyond which Gie stands as the new subject. As a protagonist, Gie occupies the position of an observer outside the domain of the Chinese and the women with whom he is connected. This position of an observer could be associated with Gie's form of masculinity, one which is confirmed through the absence of an authority figure in his family. Furthermore, Gie's manliness is constituted via the representation of women and men around him (such as Han) as marginal characters. Take, for example, Ira, his most committed co-worker and girlfriend who, although actively participates in the student movement, defers to Gie who is always in charge of many affairs. The women in the film help Gie but none is able to develop a proper relationship with him. Gie works well with them when they are in the mission, but their communication seems to fail once they are off-duty. In

representing Gie in this way, Riri portrays the masculine subjectivity of Gie as formed only through a mission and as being in constant danger of dissolution once the mission is over.

In her study of *Gie*, Paramaditha suggests that the difficulty Gie faces in getting personal and sexual with women reveals an underlying attempt by the film to challenge the "nationalized masculinity" of the state. While this may have been Riri's intention, there is also an attempt to restore Gie as heroic figure in the memories of the women he once pursued. In the film it is Ira (not any member of Gie's family) who receives the news of Gie's sudden death. Ira receives the news with grief and her feeling represents that of everyone else. The "heroic" figure continues to live in the minds of the women he once pursued and by extension, these women represent the national memory. In this way, Gie becomes a transcendental hero who never dies, for his memory will be carried over by women who serve as custodians of national memory to the following generation. The historical Gie reportedly died in an accident while mountaineering. He inhaled poisonous gas from the mountain. The scene of his death is not shown in the film, just as his diary could not depict the scene. But there is a sense of immortality here for what is more important perhaps is how the news of his death is received by a woman figure and via her the image of the national male hero is recuperated. Although in his lived lifetime, Gie was not able to reach out to women, Riri finally gives him an afterlife by delivering him into women's memory.

CONCLUSION: FILM, PUBLIC EYES AND THE RELEVANCE OF HISTORY

Riri's film is situated in the cultural horizon of the 2000s – a melancholic time of moving backward and forward working both with and against the political cultures of the Suharto era. Riri's film also challenges the horizon out of which it emerges, for instance, by articulating a new model of masculinity for an Indonesian hero, and, as this chapter has shown, by redefining the image of Indonesian students as the rational and idealistic agent of change – the subjectivity that might give hope to future Indonesia.

Soe Hok Gie represents an unwavering type of student who cannot be easily harnessed by any political power. The film retrieves the social turmoil and political manoeuvre of both the Sukarno and Suharto eras as the context to present the integrity of Gie as the embodiment of an ideal youth. In fact for Riri the problematic eras of both Sukarno and Suharto are the condition of possibility for the emergence of Gie as a new type of hero. The film stages him as representing an ideal youth that answers to the need of the present for such prototype. However, as I have also suggested, this ideal type is achieved

by way of transcending Gie's ethnicity, for only then in the end can anyone become a Gie. A "role model" is also a subject that best transcends history and culture. If a Chinese could leave behind his or her ethnic identity to become a "universal" subject, then everyone else could do just the same and become a "Gie."

In this sense, Riri's choice of Nicholas Saputra as the actor to play the adult Gie in the film is symptomatic of a larger public force at work. Riri explains that Saputra, a Eurasian, was chosen because he met "the artistic, quality, credibility, enthusiasm and commercial criteria." The criteria point to the "right" image for Gie as a supra-local subject. By featuring Saputra, the adult Gie appears as a non-Chinese subject. Riri defends the choice of Saputra on aesthetic and commercial grounds, arguing that Gie himself would not "make a fuss about one's background, ethnic origin and so forth. Neither had he ever joined the struggle put up by the Chinese ethnic groups."[32] While this is not entirely true, as a significant portion of Gie's diary reveals his unresolved struggle over the question of Chinese, Riri's glossing over of Gie's ethnic question points to the power of public discourse that still tends to separate the Chinese from the domain of national heroes. Riri continues to follow the general trait of film-making in Indonesian postcolonial history – a trait that follows the nationalist agenda in which, as Heider puts it, "religions, regional cultures, and regional languages are recognizable but only as identifying marks, not as important motivating aspects of people's lives."[33] The creation of Gie as an ideal type thus points not only to the intention of the producer and the director of the film, it points also to the social field which has been asking for a transcendental type of hero in our time of "transition." Film produces images that are both informed by and made available to the public. For film to gain effect it must rely on the public image which it helps to construct. Film produces identification, but it also relies on the kind of identification that has been operating in society. To gain support from the audience, films thus are pressed to be sensitive to the changing perception of the public.

Since Indonesia entered the post-Suharto era, two social actors have been recuperated from Indonesian history. The first is the *mahasiswa*, whose crucial role in challenging political power is recovered by Gie. The second is the ethnic Chinese, whose culture and language are beginning to be accepted in Indonesia's public sphere. Yet while these two types of social actors are central to the recounting of the Indonesia riots of 1998, which led to the fall of Suharto, they occupy two different spheres. The world of the *mahasiswa* remains distinct from that of the Chinese. As pointed out earlier, Indonesian nationalists today celebrate the return of the university students as the agent of change and are gradually recognizing the Chinese as part of Indonesian history. But they do not seem prepared to see the intermingling of these two worlds. In this context, *Gie* is the first film to profoundly interrogate the

possibility of recuperating these two subjectivities in the figure of Gie. Yet, as I have suggested in this essay, while the Chinese and the heroic *mahasiswa* were mingled in the body of Gie, they could not quite interact with one another.

Finally, it has been noted that film in Indonesia does not concern itself with "historical accuracy." As Indonesian director, Teguh Karya, notes in an interview about his history-based film *Doea Tanda Mata* (1984), the historical film in Indonesia is characterized by *tafsir* and *perumpamaan*, which means interpretation (parable) and metaphor.[34] Historical films in Indonesia (and perhaps also elsewhere) "reflect present understanding of time past."[35] And especially for the nation-state of Indonesia, history is a subject that is always sensitive. This has made Indonesian films rather problematic sketches of history which contribute to the shaping of public memory. In the long run, historical films tend to be absorbed into either a medium for state propaganda or an entertainment-based public taste. Such condition has eschewed the possibility of a critical historical film.

The cinematic *Gie* confronts the filmic field that has been saturated with the power of nation-state and the commercialism of the Hollywood genre. The cinematic form follows the chronology of the diary in which the narrative is marked out by a series of dates – 1956, 1960 and so on. This temporal structure organizes the entire film and helps viewers to situate their memories or knowledge of the eras through the experience of Gie. The film makes no effort to express the problems of the time outside those stated by Gie in his diary. While the relationship between the cinematic and autobiographical diary is complex, this relation puts the film in touch with a certain historiography.

Gie, however, is not meant to be a transparent historical document. The film intends to mirror the diary, but the diary and the film retain different levels of autonomy. There are points of contact where materials in the diary are interpreted, objectified and even displaced for the adequacy of cinematic representations. The ultimate aim of the film, one can say, is to turn Gie into an ideal type of a student that transcends history itself.

Gie is a student of history. He reads Camus, Sukarno and Marx alongside other thinkers, but all of these seem unable to offer him meaningful coordinates in life. He places more trust in the innocence of "nature" and "childhood," as conveyed by the film's iteration of idyllic scenes from his boyhood and his venture into remote areas, mountains and beaches. History and politics as represented by the film threaten humanity, promising a path that leads nowhere. Both are treated with deep suspicion by Gie and seen as inadequate as the basis for the constitution of a transcendental subjectivity. In some ways Riri, like Gie, sees history and politics as products of the ruling regime, which he seeks to dismantle by upholding morality as if this position

is beyond politics. In the end if history offers no hope for the future, it is certainly the immediacy of print journalism and the diary, and now the film (in the hands of Riri Riza) that offers the post-Suharto generation a glimpse of hope for change.

NOTES

1. Nugroho, et al., *10 Tokoh Tionghoa*, 117.
2. Gie was released in 2005 by Miles Films in collaboration with Sinemart Pictures. The producer was Mira Lesmana and the director Riri Riza.
3. *Gie* received Indonesian Film Awards for Best Picture, Best Actor and Best Cinematography. Riri Riza was born in Makassar in 1970 and started his career as director in 1998 after graduating from Institute Kesenian Jakarta. He has directed several award winning films, including *Eliana, Eliana* (2002) and *Laskar Pelangi* (2008), among others.
4. Cited in Sudiarno, "Soe Hok Gie."
5. Riri, "Don't Let Standarization."
6. Kuntowijoyo, "Introduction," xxi.
7. In the national memory, heroic youths are collectively remembered on Heroes' Day (Hari Pahlawan) which is celebrated every year on November 10. The day also commemorates the 1945 Battle of Surabaya.
8. For a discussion on the re-narrating of self and history, see van Klinken, "The Battle for History."
9. Lesmana, "Notes from an Admirer," xxv."
10. The result is a screenplay written by Riri Riza, *Gie Naskah Skenario*.
11. Cited in Sudiarno "Soe Hok Gie."
12. Riri, "Notes of a demonstrator," xxix–xxx.
13. Riri, ibid, xxx; emphasis added.
14. Paramaditha, "Contesting," 44.
15. Paramaditha, ibid., 53.
16. Paramaditha, ibid., 45.
17. Paramaditha, ibid., 52.
18. Paramaditha, ibid., 54.
19. "Zaman peralihan" is also the title of a book consisting of essays by Soe Hok Gie, *Zaman Peralihan*.
20. For a discussion on the modes of these two different times, see Kuntowijoyo, "Pengantar."
21. Heider, *Indonesian Cinema*, 35; on the importance of order in the filmic culture of New Order Indonesia, see also Sen, *Indonesian Cinema*.
22. Heider, ibid., 38.
23. Victor Turner defines the liminal individuals as "neither here nor there, they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arranged by law, custom, convention and ceremonial." Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," 95. See also Turner, "Passages, Margins and Poverty."

24. Riri, "Don't let standardization."

25. On the ways in which Gie divides the moral from the political (as part of the political tradition of Indonesian intellectual after Independence), see Dhakidae, "Soe Hok Gie."

26. On *remaja* films during the Suharto era, see Sen, "Film Remaja."

27. Kuntowijoyo even suggests that Gie's writing (if not the figure of Gie himself) could create a new kind of "exemplary center" for Indonesia (in the post-Suharto era), which was undergoing a crisis of legitimacy in its ruling realm (Kuntowijoyo, "Introduction," xxii).

28. Soe, *Soe Hok Gie*, 58.

29. Riri Riza is fully aware of the particularity of ethnic Chinese in Indonesian history, as he reflects: "What makes it extraordinary is that (the young activist) is depicted through the figure of Gie, someone who came from a highly vulnerable social group, Indonesians of Chinese origin. I have found that since I was eight and was still living in Makassar, Chinese Indonesians have often been victimized by many groups. I have witnessed how their houses have been destroyed. Even when a Chinese Indonesian beat his housemaid, all Chinese Indonesians had to bear the brunt. Gie came from this circle and this is important to understand." See: Riri, "Don't let standardization."

30. For a discussion on the representation of ethnic Chinese in a post-reformasi film, see Sen, "'Chinese' Indonesians." In the mid-January of 2009, Bentara Budaya Jakarta screened several short and feature films on Chinese Indonesian. Beside *Ca-Bau-Kan* (2002) (discussed in the aforementioned essay by Sen), there were also, among others, *May* (2008); *The Anniversaries* (2006); *Anak Naga Beranak Naga* (2005), *Sugiharti Halim* (2008); *Cheng Cheng Po*, and *Babi Buta Yang Ingin Terbang*. For a brief write-up on the event, see Bentara Budaya, "Pemutaran."

31. Soe, *Soe Hok Gie*, 58.

32. Riri, "Don't let standardization."

33. Heider, *Indonesian Cinema*, 38.

34. Heider, ibid., 100.

35. Heider, ibid., 100.

Chapter 5

Family Photo Album

This chapter on family album was first written over 10 years ago, in 2006, at the invitation of Peter Post for a research programme on Chinese Indonesians with a particular focus on "visual cultures."[1] The programme was associated with a substantial collection of home videos and family photo albums of an elite peranakan Chinese family held in the library of the NIOD. The initial idea was to jumpstart the visual project by making a preliminary interpretation of the materials. As indicated in my introduction, I was drawn into the project for various reasons, one of which was curiosity over the lifestyle of a wealthy ethnic Chinese family living under colonial conditions, as it was represented in the "private sphere" of a family photo album. Other reasons include the half-joking provocation of Peter Post who feels that since we would never be materially rich in this circle of life, studying the upper class would make us feel elevated. At a deeper level, my concern was about how to represent ethnic Chinese as a category that cannot be separated from politics not only of colonial time, but also of postcolonial Suharto and post-reformasi Indonesia. I thus took the opportunity to write a paper on this subject, which, it was agreed, would be supported by materials gathered by Peter Post and Koh Keng Wee, who had access to the family. My task was to read across images in order to tease out the intersections of ethnic, class and national identities as they evolved under colonial modernity. I consider my attempt as a permanent work in progress, as reading across images sustained only by fluctuating memories that are mediated by discursive information only leaves me with the feeling of wonder and uncertainty about what I have written here. Nevertheless, I hope it contributes to an understanding of a period known as the late colonial era and about how the upper class ethnic Chinese photographers constructed themselves, their families and their surroundings through the framing of their camera and through the organization of the family album.

This chapter thus is a preliminary exploration of some aspects of a family photo album, as it was represented by the Kwee family, a peranakan elite family who once owned a sugar factory in Djatti Piring, Central-West Java, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The photographs were largely taken by Kwee Zwan Liang (1896–1959), the second son of the founder of the factory and compiled in several photo albums.[2] I seek to understand the formation of ethnic Chinese identity through this particular visual medium, seeing the representation as a specific historical phenomenon that emerged in response to the epochal changes that took place between the 1920s and the 1950s.

NOTES ON THE FORMAT OF THE FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM; ITS ROLE AS A MEDIUM FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH AND WAYS OF READING IT[3]

The photo album of the Kwee family follows a book format, which allows stories to be told chronologically. Prints of different sizes were mounted directly on the blank pages. Presumably, if we bring together all of the albums, we would probably see a chronologically structured visual story with a beginning and end. The composition of a single album (say from 1939 to 1956) could then be viewed as a segment of a story as a whole. As far as the story is concerned, the *arrangement* of the photographs (the layout of the photos in the album) is of particular importance. We can in fact say that the craft of the photo album comes not only from the selection of photos but also from the ways in which the photos are carefully organized and made to relate to each other. The composition of pictures in the photo album offers particular points even though they often appear to have no particular significance (especially to the outsiders) but nevertheless they remain meaningful to the family members.

Photo album thus is not only a place where the photographs are kept for viewing. It is also a place to connect different photos and reframe them under a particular theme or narrative. In reading a family album, it would be useful to consider the fact that methodologically snapshots came before the arrangement of the photographs. The meaning invested in photographs when they were taken can be completely different from the meaning constructed during the composition of them in the family album. Some photographs might not find their place in the photo album, but the photo album is obviously dependent on the availability of photographs. The photographs and the photo album each occupy a different time and space even though we tend to understand them as a coherent unit and read them in terms of their seamless continuity. The composition of the photographs in the album thus could be seen as

merely an attempt to articulate a voice for the different snapshots so that they would all contribute to a narrative coherent enough to become a visual history of a family moving forward (and backward) in time.

To help images speak, captions are often made to indicate the events, the places and the dates of the occasions when photographs were taken. Some photo albums contained anecdotal humorous information that often only family members could appreciate. Names are only indicated either for someone outside the family or for someone particularly dear at heart. By contrast, there are pages completely devoid of any text and reference. Readers are supposed to be able to recognize the persons in those images and presumably any textual information on them would be redundant. This familial form of representation defines the identity of both the family members and the viewers. The album is for those who already know (or could easily know) the people depicted in the album and how they are connected to each other (with no need for any research). This mode of display works through a code shared only by family members but is often unavailable to outsiders. As such, a family album works to *naturalize* the relations among family members.

We also agree that family album and oral history comes together. In fact, the photographs could be seen merely as a tool (helping device) for recollection of a more complete and complex story told in a conversational manner. (Consequently then, we can also say that since memories depend on the photographs, the visual images in turn, also structure memories.) Clearly one needs to take on an oral history approach to build on a visual narrative inscribed in the image. However, there is also a danger to read literally photographic images for their truth claim and to anchor meanings on the basis of oral history. The reading of a photograph (even as this is aided by oral history) reveals not only the "world" inscribed in the photograph, but also the values of the readers themselves. In addition, photographs cannot adequately represent reality, and they can also be endlessly read. It is in this sense that photographs and family albums need to be approached as an attempt on the parts of the photographer to represent, construct and grasp social realities within which he and his subjects are embedded. Such approach would recognize the limit to what one can do with photographs, and that in the photograph, there are irreconcilable tension between realities and illusion, truth and desire.

In a way, there is a component of truth when one says that every family album is unique, for the dream and the nightmare of each family is different. Yet, it is also useful to acknowledge that all family photos look strikingly similar. On this basis, it is worth asking how photo albums could also function autonomously without the anchoring guide of oral history. Could there be any misreading when any reading is in fact an act of reinterpretation, even as one receives help from the family? In any case, family albums follow a certain convention of representation – the physical sign of which is

readable. The convention is in no way rigid. Instead it develops over time in response to changing social norms and visual traditions the course of which are projected in the variation of themes and styles and on what should be represented. There are always clues for outsiders to read the photographs even though there are always messages that could only be grasped by the insiders. Through a particular way of analysing images, one could read beneath the surface and against the ideologies that the album supports, even as this reading is in contradiction with the expectation of the family members. In any case, contestation, contradiction and incompleteness are part of visual cultures.

What follows are interpretations of the contents of the Kwee family photo album. I see the family album not so much as the reflection of the peranakan world, but more as how the ethnic Chinese interpret the world within which they are embedded. How did they frame their desired and real life, and how did they exclude others? How did the imagery inform both cultural reproduction and the emergence of a different social norm associated with the twentieth-century peranakan family? How did the photographs reproduce or criticize the elite peranakan identities as this diverse social group encountered rapid social and political change around them? But first, who was the photographer and the people depicted in his album?

THE PHOTOGRAPHER AND HIS SON

Figure 5.1 shows Kwee Zwan Liang, the photographer, and his young son, Kwee Kiem Han, who now owns the family album. Zwan Liang titled the photo: "father and son" (in Dutch) to indicate the importance of their relationship. This picture was taken when the family was on vacation some time in 1939. We know that vacations are meant to remove us from routine and they are recorded largely by candid snapshots. But the posture here is formal and it illustrates the strength of the ties between the father and the son. One could argue that the photo of Zwan Liang and his son was modelled on existing convention of photographic portraiture, which mimics both Chinese and Western portraitures. "Father and son" photograph is a familiar genre especially in the circle of Chinese family. The figure of Zwee Liang and Han recalls an earlier tradition of Chinese portrait taken often in a studio. The Chinese portrait of father and son however often highlights the authority of the father, who would be seated with one hand on his lap and another holding a book – a symbol of culture and traditional memory while the boy would typically stand slightly behind him.[4] The background would often be blurred to allow the foreground figures to be the focal point. With no background the image emphasizes the sense of timelessness of their relationship.

Figure 5.1 Kwee Zwan Liang, the photographer and his young son, Kwee Kiem Han.
Source: The Kwee Private Photo Albums, NIOD.

The photo of "Zwan Liang and his son" seems to capture a similar patriarchal tradition, but there is a profound difference. Zwan Liang and his son dressed up in an informal modern outfit that matches their modern villa at the background. He was standing (instead of sitting, which was a symbol of traditional authority) slightly behind his son, and with a camera on his hands he sought to convey a message that he was not only a father, but also a photographer who documented not only his tie with his son, but also the life of his young son. Instead of highlighting himself as a central father figure, Zwan Liang set himself up as the family photographer who stood behind (instead of before) his son from the position of an observer. Their relations are mediated by the new technology and not by an age-old tradition where the father figure is dominant.

The image of Zwan Liang and his son, nevertheless, does not problematize the convention of representation of Chinese family for they too emphasize the lasting relationship of a patriarchal lineage. Yet, the shift of focus from father to son indicates a different mentality. Putting forward his son, Zwan Liang indicates an orientation to the future that ran counter to the traditional conception of returning to the central father figure as the origin of civilization. The supremacy of the father, as the centre of traditional family photography,

had given way to that of the son even though such representation does not problematize the male-centred conception of family.

The photograph of Zwan Liang and his son sought to construct a cultural expression that looks forward to the future while regenerating the vitality of an older tradition of the "father and son" imagery. In this regard, the position of "father as photographer" plays a critical role in articulating a different "father and son" relationship. The father's task of recording the everyday life of his family had set a distance between him and the subject of his camera. Behind the frame, Zwan Liang articulated a position for the family. The photographs he took could be seen as constituting both cultural reproduction and cultural criticism (of an earlier tradition). By refashioning an earlier visual tradition, Zwan Liang set himself up as both a father *and* a photographer living in a new time. Yet, regardless of how advance the staging of the relation between father and son might be, the photo points to a network of family – a larger bond that was instrumental for the collective imagination of the Kwee family as a whole.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER AND HIS HOUSEHOLD

In Figure 5.2, the photographer and members of his household pose before a camera. It was taken during the family vacation in 1939. This image is significant partly because, like Figure 5.1, the photographer, Kwee Zwan Liang, himself is in the image. He, however, stood at the sideline leaving a little gap between him and the group. With hands holding a camera, Zwan Liang established himself as a photographer of a photograph of himself with his family. The distance he created between himself and the group established him as the photographer who stood "outside" the circle and yet with a camera in his hands, he was in control over them.

If we cut Zwan Liang out, then, Liem Hwat Nio (Roos), his wife who stands at the centre, would become the focal point of the image. The spatial configuration in this photo indicates a hierarchy of familial order. Roos and Kiem King (the younger brother of Kiem Han), who stands in front of Roos, occupy the same level of ground as that of Zwan Liang. They are flanked by two women standing behind them in the terrace. These women are probably members of the extended family. Behind them, separated by a column, stands the servant of the house. The spatial configuration in this image moves hierarchically from the boy at the front down to the women in the terrace and the servant inside the house. The villa behind them completes the impression of a sustained order. With the house, they collectively constitute a scene of domesticity. In such photo, meaning is established through a convention of familial hierarchy, one that seems to be common in the peranakan elite family in the late colonial Java. Figure 5.2 thus offers us a ring of order that structures the

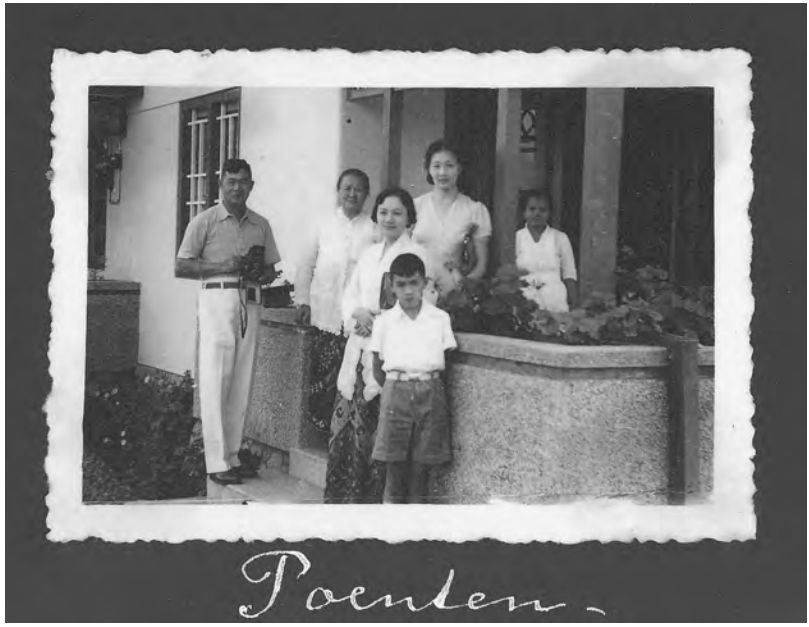

Figure 5.2 Zwan Liang, the photographer and members of his household (courtesy of the author).

domestic life of the peranakan Chinese in Indonesia. It represents the peranakan elite family in the larger context of colonial history. Standing organizationally at the threshold between the indoor and the outdoor, the figures in the photo confirm the values of the elite Chinese world and the significance of the extended family and the servant in sustaining the family.

Yet, if we consider again the presence of Zwan Liang with his camera in the picture, we begin to be aware at the same time that such order is not always natural and visible. The man with his camera signifies that this world of his ought to be documented in order for it to be sustained. Family, like all artefacts, is a constructed entity that needs to be represented to make its imagery visible. The order of the family has to be staged and confirmed through photographs. The photograph, in turn, naturalizes such relations.

Figure 5.2 indicates to us the world of Zwan Liang's family, but formal analysis alone won't tell us much about the larger historical context and the significance of the incoming war in Java. Or perhaps we should look at the photograph differently. Could the profound sense of unity, settlement and coherency, which marked many of Zwan Liang's photographs, indicate instead the uncertainty of the social and political ground on which they stood? Before we consider this possibility of reading Kwee family photo album, perhaps we should explore the ways in which the family defines their social identities through an excursion to public places.

FAMILY VACATION AND CLASS FORMATION

Figures 5.1 and 5.2 that we have discussed above were taken as part of the family excursion to a resort area in Java. Family excursion, holiday resorts, a cosy villa, scenic backdrops, mountains and monuments are familiar themes in the family album. But in the Indies, tourist sites had become popular only in the 1930s when the tourist map of Java was fully drawn and postcards had become a key component in tourist industries. By then, visiting places promoted by postcards had already become a social trend for the elite circle of colonial society. In the Kwee photo album, we found several postcards that are placed alongside family photographs. But postcards might mean other things to Zwan Liang. We could say that the postcards offered a framework for Zwan Liang to frame his own work. In any case, postcards were images framed by professionals whose work helps to turn ordinary places into a symbol of nature and a site desired by tourists. Visiting places already framed by postcards could thus be seen as a journey that would cultivate taste and confirm social status and cultural property.

The Kwee family indeed followed the postcards. They visited well-known resort places such as Sarangan and Borobudur. They also drove around major cities of Semarang and Bandung and took pictures of their architecture from the window of their car. The excursion to these places not only signifies mobility and expresses the desire to connect the family to the sites of nature and civilization but also serves pedagogical purpose for a proper upbringing. The juxtaposition between the photograph of Kwee Kiem King (Eugene) graduating from a Dutch school in 1939 and the picture of the family trip to the platform of stupas (the enlightened knowledge) in the Borobudur in the same year testifies to this pedagogical consciousness (Figure 5.3).

We know that the Kwee family was particularly fond of travelling – they not only travelled to visit relatives in other parts of Java, but also to cultivate class status. From the way members of the family dressed themselves up we know that excursion was more than just for relaxation. A range of other artefacts, which signifies status, often appears in the pictures, such as the hotel, the villa and the car (Figure 5.4).

While the family registers their presence in the touristic landscape, they also drew a line between them and the surrounding environment. They register their presence through their umbrella, their hat, their automobile, the hotel where they were staying and their birds' eye view of the surrounding. We know that family membership is drawn on the sense of filiation; in other words, one comes to understand oneself in relation to other groups and other spaces. In this sense, excursion to these other places helps to construct familial bond and confirm social identity. The series of images taken during the family excursion points to a construction of the Kwee family's sense of

Figure 5.3 Pedagogy West and East: Kwee Kiem King (Eugene) graduating from a Dutch school in 1939 (top); Family trip to Borobudur (bottom) (courtesy of the author).

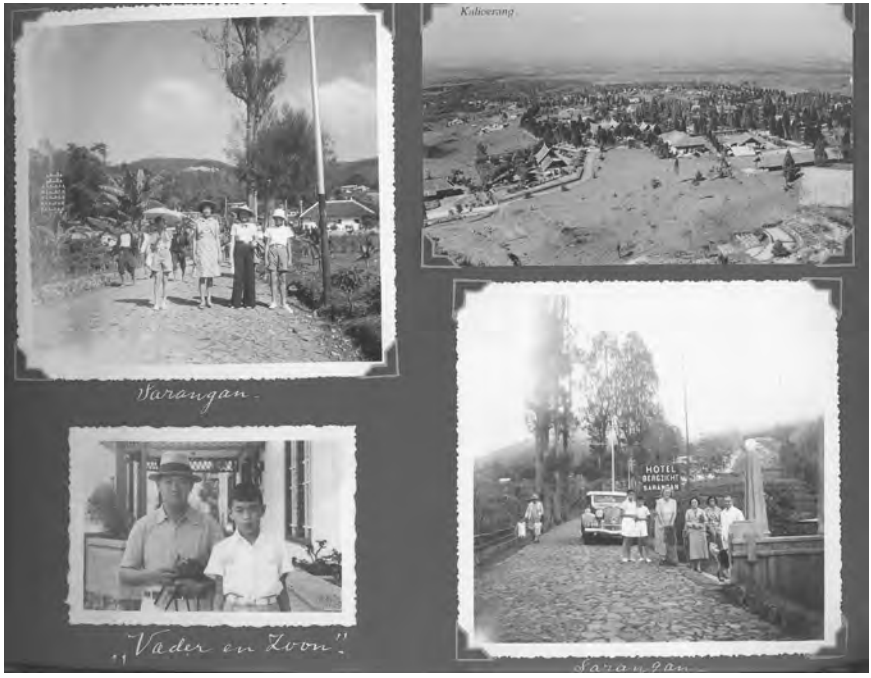

Figure 5.4 Indonesian landscape, family excursion and construction of self (courtesy of the author).

identity as it is mediated by a complex of symbols and events that is not only personal and familial, but also at once collective and public.

ANCESTRAL WORSHIP

The vocabulary of filiation, as it is articulated in the family excursion, is however most strongly expressed in the representation of death, regeneration and family inheritance. The members of Kwee family were heirs to the business of their father who had established a sugar business foundation for them. Perhaps this is why the family album is filled with images that point to the importance of genealogy. In Figure 5.5, Kwee Lee Nio (Helene) (the photographer's niece) was photographed in a bed with her new born baby.

The photo of Helene and her baby was organized to sit next to a photo of the graveyard of Helene's father, Kwee Zwan Lwan (brother of Kwee Zwan Liang), who died in the year when Helene's baby was born. Below these two images of birth and death are close ups of Helene's baby as if the camera seeks to confirm the existence of a new life. Here, juxtaposing two different

Figure 5.5 Birth and Death: Kwee Lee Nio's baby and the grave of Kwee Zwan Lwan (courtesy of the author).

generations and contrasting images of life and death, a genealogical conception of time emerges. The living and the dead continuingly shape each other as if there is no clear boundary between the two realms. The future and the past not only can be inscribed in the present, but they are both in the present. Here, the behaviour of the ancestor in the past seems to exert influence on the present. Yet, it was the new born that receives most attention from the camera. Life is enhanced through multiple shots of close up even as connection (through montage) was made to the ancestor. The emphasis here is on the need to know one's family history an expression that is familiar to Chinese culture.

Yet if we set the family genealogy against memories and scenes of war, uncertainty and decolonization, we could also say that the imagery of familial lineage and cultural inheritance offers a stable ground and trajectory to conceive survival, continuity and unity. As a piece of evidence of death and birth, Figure 5.5 also frays a way to conceive the "realities" of the world outside the framework of the camera. One might think that the circle of death and birth is the dominant theme that structures the representation of family in the Kwee family album (or any family album), but we could also say that the social and historical realities of war, its aftermath and uncertainty of the

future might had helped constitute a temporality in which ancestral legacy appears to continue.

In this sense the temporal construction of the Kwee family album could not be consistently linear, even though it is chronologically structured. Family photos are medium for recollection often of memories that might have little to do with what is actually in the picture. Figure 5.5 was taken in 1947 when Indonesia was undergoing revolution against the returning Dutch. Ethnic Chinese communities were largely neutral throughout the time even though anti-Chinese violence broke out in many places in Java. Yet, images of war and violence are not part of the Kwee family album. They were excluded, or better, covered over by familial images of natural death and birth. It seems like the collective violence and uncertainty in the time of revolution was recuperated by another form of collectivity founded on the narrative of birth and regeneration of family. Thus, the Kwee family photos seemed to become more important at the time when epochal change was at the horizon. In this context, marriages and reproduction could be seen as crucial responses to a time that promises only uncertainty and discontinuity.

MARRIAGE AND POLITICS OF ALLIANCES

Weddings, like events of child birth and death, are moments for the re-enactment of social identities and social relations. Its importance is evidenced in the Kwee family album. In the last page of the photo album that I looked at, there are images of three weddings of three members of the family that occurred at three different times and at three different places. There is a large photo of the wedding of our photographer, Kwee Zwan Liang, and Liem Hwat Nio (Roos) in Surabaya in 1922; on the same page are photos of two other weddings, one in Djatti Piring also in 1922 and the other in Bandung in 1953. The juxtaposition of these different weddings across time and space can be seen as a standard recording of family events, but they also communicate something more. They all share the same convention of representation for a wedding couple at that time, such as Western outfits, flowers and Greco Romanic columns, but perhaps more importantly they share a similar class position for they all belong to members of elite families in Java. We do not know how they ended up as couples, but their marriage represents a larger historical phenomenon central to the formation of the elite peranakan identity, that is the expansion of network via strategic alliance between families of similar social position. The arrangement of the photographs conveys, confirms and celebrates such strategic alliance.

We could thus see how the photo of the *post*-war 1953 wedding is placed in a series of weddings that took place in the *pre*-war1922. The wedding photos

were captioned by the album organizer to indicate the places and the dates of "our weddings" at once consolidating the familial and geographical proximity between them. Put together in the family album, the wedding couples are presented as securely embedded within the network of elite families. The recent marriage arrangement incorporates the earlier ones and vice versa. They absorb each other and confirm the continuation of the system that would reproduce itself through further heterosexual union from a similar class. With strategic marriages, members of the family were supposed to expand with minimum contradictions. In fact, the authority of the family was and could only be secured through this form of calculated series of alliance. This conjugal relationship between upper classes and of same ethnic background was encouraged to consolidate each family position one that would be solid enough to live through different economic and political orders. In a way, we could say that all the life styles captured in the whole family album were made possible by just such strategic marriage alliances.

CULTURAL SYNCRETISM

During the wedding, there were other forms of cultural incorporation. Wedding scenes (of family members and friends) took many pages of the Kwee family album. Every wedding seems to be filled with images of family members, relatives and friends who attended the event as if the event is theirs too. Zwan Liang recorded the rituals that brought together various faces and traditions. We could see in the family album, Confucian rituals of respecting ancestors and the ways in which the elders stayed in line (according to their age) to offer their blessing to the married couple. We also see the display of Western dress, the fashion from shanghai and the best of Javanese kebaya in the event. Foods of various kinds were on display and they were eaten in a most indigenous manner, using hands and banana leaves. Captions depicting the event were in both Chinese and Dutch.

Cultural syncretism could be seen as characteristic of the peranakan family even though the photo album only portrayed marriages from members of the same ethnic background. As far as the Kwee family is concerned, we would perhaps want to consider the particularity of the sugar industry in the colony, which has a long established history of social and cultural syncretism (within a framework of power relation). We will discuss more on the role of the sugar industry in the identity formation of the Kwee family, but it is sufficient to point out that the sugar factory of the Kwee family had Indo-European managerial and technical staffs as well as Javanese male and female workers and servants. In fact, the first wife of Kwee Keng Liem – who inherited the factory in 1884 from his father – was a Sino-Javanese woman and their son

used to own the factory before it was taken over by Kwee Zwan Lwan, the big brother of our photographer and the son of Keng Liem and his second wife, Tan Hok Nio. We could also assume that the operation of new machines often incorporated local rituals of offering. The households too were supported by a large pool of Javanese servants, drivers and nannies. This mix of old and new symbols and practices that cuts across different cultures is characteristic though never quite rupture the social hierarchy of colonial society. It continued to operate in the post-sugar factory era, as represented in the snapshots of one of the wedding parties.

An interesting research agenda would be to explore the ways in which the family incorporated various cultural forms around them in order to sustain and develop a form of Chinese identities capable of living through the changing social and political contexts of the time. How did the everyday life of the family interact with those of other traditions and constitute eventually a new type of cultural practice capable of responding to the changing forces of time?

PROPERTY AND THE HOUSEFRONTS

At the time of political change in society, family album occupies a significant position less in recording the change, but more in preserving what might get lost in the course of change. In making visible family networks and properties, the album confirms both the existence of the bond and the desire for the continuation of such relation. Yet, in effect, the pervasive recording of the elite familial relation often confirms even further the weakening of such relations to register influence in the rapid changing colonial society. It is not clear how the social and political circumstances of the 1950s (at the time when anti-colonial nationalism was on the rise and peranakan family business in general was in decline) impact the personal, familial and the collective history of the Kwee family, but there are pages that speaks the importance of property in grounding the network of the elite family.

They show a set of family photos taken by Zwan Liang at various places in Java. Family members are photographed with elements of their properties in the background. They are at the doorway, inside a house, behind a high fence, at the housefront, at the terrace in varying scales and proportions. We do not know everyone depicted in the picture and how they are related to each other, but perhaps we do not need to know them so well. The highlight here is the family event and the existence of the family's gardens, the houses and the estates. The captions indicate the sites of the family properties: "Dj. Dago 15 Bandoeng," "Dj. Surapati 27, the house of the Chief Master," "Dj. Nyland 5, Bandoeng" and "Dj. Tjendana 5, Soerabaja." What the pictures try to show

is that the people in the photographs are claiming their spaces. They are in control of the territory, property and their own networks.

The following Figure 5.6 speaks a similar kind of voice but it makes a broader connection that incorporate imagery of property, family, marriage, death, children and inheritance.

Taken in 1953, the photograph (in the middle) shows the house of the factory's administrator who are sitting with his wife, wedding engagement, the sweet children – the possible heirs of the estate properties, the elderly and the burial ground all in one seemingly unbreakable circle that promises permanency or continuity in the time of change. The family is securely embedded in the community of extended family, which guarantees that there are always people portrayed in the picture (young, old and even the dead) to take care of the property. The more people around in the picture, the more capable they are in controlling the world around them.

On the top right is a picture of G.B. (it possibly means "Grote Broer" or big brother in which case it must be a picture of Kwee Zwan Hong (1869–1955), former boss and first son of Kwee Keng Liem and his first wife, and half-brother of Zwan Liang) who posed with authority and dignity. "G.B." is the oldest of all that appears in the album. "G.B." sat on an armchair and the

Figure 5.6 Property, family and inheritance (courtesy of the author).

camera posed at him in full body with a gesture of a dignitary. This formal representation of an elderly reflects an ideal of propriety and social identity. Its style, however, appropriates Chinese ancestral portrait. Diagonally across the album at the opposite corner of "G.B." (bottom-left) is the graveyard of Kwee Keng Liem (the father of "G.B.") visited by Zwan Liang, Roos and their daughter along with two male persons. The Portrait of G.B. seating on an arm-chair is placed next to the images of family gathering, birthday, wedding engagement, private property and a visit to "G.B." 's own cemetery. This co-existence of images of life and death returns the modern family back to its "Chinese" ancestral tradition.

THE INTERIOR SPACES AND THE CORE OF THE HOUSE

If genealogical work is of particular importance in the consolidation of the family relations and property, we would imagine that some features of these relations must have found a place in the interior of the house. The major component in the interior of a Chinese house, as we are told, is the altar for ancestral worship. But this would perhaps only apply to a Confucian family. It is not entirely clear how members of the Kwee family would define themselves religiously. They celebrated Christmas; they followed Confucian practices and they believed in Daoist and other local symbols. But as far as the interior of the house is concerned, the dining room appears to be the core of the family life.

Figure 5.7 shows scenes of the interior of the house of Zwan Liang at Dj. Nyland 5, Bandoeng. The majority of the shots were taken during Zwan Liang's birthday (November 11, 1952). There is, however, a clear intention on the part of the photographer to expose the interior spaces of his house. The photos in the middle row indicate the loftiness of the dining room (Figure 5.7, middle row). The numbers of people assembled around the table testifies to the spaciousness of the dining room. It accommodates both the people and the food on the table at once indicating the extended network of the family. Zwan Liang, the father, is wearing a tie signifying that he is the owner of the house, which is fashioned after some kind of tropical modern style architecture.

Next to the image of the dining room is the living room (Figure 5.7, middle right) where the father, the mother and the daughter are sitting in a well-organized interior. They are surrounded by emblems of modernity, such as a piano, which is perfectly flanked by a door and a window. Family photographs, painting, clock, decorative glass doors, tropical rattan chairs and coffee tables all are placed to underpin the photograph's ordered space. The caption in Dutch reads "het gezellige hoekje," which could roughly be translated as "the cozy corner."

Figure 5.7 The House and the interior (courtesy of the author).

The flowers on the coffee table, the plants at the window and the reading lamps complete the scene of intellectuality in the space of domesticity. They were not talking to each other but each of them was absorbed individually in a quiet but relaxing domestic activity. None of them is looking at the camera, but the father remains the central figure for he is looking up to the window. The mother is reading and the daughter is sewing with their eyes downturned. The layout of the furniture, the accessories and the people in the pictures represents order and hierarchy, a theme that is also expressed in the layout of the foods on the table. The food offered at Zwan Liang's birthday is set next to the offering to the deceased. The photo at the graveyard was taken on October 20, 1952 (few weeks before Zwan Linag's birthday) showing Roos at Kwee Keng Liem's grave. The offerings are made in perfect symmetrical order (Figure 5.7, bottom middle).

Roos, the mother, seemed to be the one who extends the service. She (with the help of her servants of course) prepares all the offering as she is standing next to the tomb. Her hand is on the stone, a gesture that claims authority over the arrangement of the offering. Touching and arm stretching is a sign of claiming a relation and responsibility. Gender relation quite clearly

structures the contents of the photographs. The two snapshots at the upper right of Figure 5.7 depict two kinds of feminine spaces (the kitchen and the bedroom) that are rarely got exposed in any family album. These fragmented scenes of the house, the kitchen, the bedroom, the living room and the dining room are all arranged to sustain the two images at the centre, which depicts the photograph of Zwan Liang flanked by Roos and their daughter, Piep. They claim the central space of the album and position the dining room as the core of the house.

On the bottom right of Figure 5.7, a male servant is snapshot while he was taking care of both a young child and a dog on the lawn. This is one of the most sympathetic of the very few images of the family servant. Domestic service remained a subject that seems to interest Zwan Liang. It was a common and crucial feature of his family culture and perhaps for that reason Zwan Liang did not leave the servants out of the family album. By ways of conclusion, the following section takes up Zwan Liang's depiction of the servitudes.

MOTHER–CHILD AND OTHER INTIMACIES

Having shown some of the ways in which Zwan Liang's photography rendered the family bond, it would be interesting to consider some other relations where gender and class intersect. The image of "mother/woman and child" often appeared in Kwee photo albums (Figures 5.8 and 5.9). Perhaps it is because this type of image has a force of family photographic convention, which stemmed from the influence of the widely accepted stereotypes of the good mother. It is not entirely clear as to what degree Christianity (and its representation of mother and child as depicted in Madonna and Christ) played a role in the life of Kwee family, but I think the image of mother and child is incorporated largely because it carries a patriarchal convention familiar to Chinese culture, such as the location of mother in Confucian's familial order.

We can assume that Zwan Liang knows the convention well. He produced several images of "mother and child," but he also took the reality that broke the illusion of mother–child harmonious relation. In Figure 5.9, we see a photograph of Roos holding up a little boy from the hands of his household nanny, known as *baboe*. The image shows Roos's grip is strong and sure, but the child's body and his attention is moving in opposite direction.

The child avoids leaning on Ross. Instead he is looking for the nursemaid with whom he has (more) intimate contact. This photograph speaks with a different accent and it displaces the earlier photograph, which depicts the unity of mother and child. It is clearly an image that provides a different but also familiar commentary on the family life where children are entrusted to the care of Indonesian women. It undermines the view that the family is

Figure 5.8 Mother and child (courtesy of the author).

Figure 5.9 *Baboe* and child (courtesy of the author).

self-sustaining for the relations are in fact depends on the servitude of the servants and *baboes* who are often excluded in the standard family album. The fact that this photograph is included raises an interesting question of Zwan Liang's own position towards the role of Indonesian servants in providing the support needed for his family.

CONTEXT, QUESTIONS AND SPECULATIONS: THE PHOTOGRAPHER, HIS ALBUM AND HIS TIME

After flipping through the family album and selectively interpret the representation as a form of cultural reproduction as well as cultural criticism of peranakan elite social environment, could we say that the fixation on the images of death, marriage, the new born, youth, women, family members and properties that appeared in the photo album is not merely connected to the class formation of ethnic Chinese at the time, but also related to the collective sense of social and political crisis that had begun to be felt by the family in the late colonial Indies? Could we say that the anxiety and uncertainty of the time was displaced into and covered over by the continuous representation in the family album of the imagery of property, bondage and normality? Could we say that the family bond rendered in Zwan Liang's photography was a response (perhaps unconsciously?) to the time of uncertainty as Indonesia underwent rapid and profound changes in its social and political life. Yet, what are the interaction between the family photo and the larger social and political environment? Below are some thoughts on the social contexts for and against which the images might had operated.

Kwee Zwan Liang (1896–1959), the photographer, was born into the family in 1896, the year in which his father Kwee Keng Liem started the family's sugar factory in Djatti Piring. We do not know yet how Kwee Keng Liem managed to establish a sugar factory at that time, but sugar industries are not new to Chinese in Indonesia. I will come back to the historical connection between sugar industries, modernity and ethnic Chinese and how it might play a crucial role in shaping the self-representation of the Kwee family, but let us first explore some other key factors that might have contributed to the subjectivity of Kwee Zwan Liang, the photographer and the ways in which he used family photo albums in the colonial era and in the time of change.

The 1890s was more than just an important era for the Kwee family. It was marked by dramatic changes in the social and political life of peranakan Chinese as a whole. First, the colonial state had just ended the residential restrictions and the travel pass system for the Chinese. This abolition had allowed the Chinese population to live in the growing suburb, the interior towns as well as villages for livelihood. Unleashed from spatial restriction,

ethnic Chinese could own and cultivate agricultural land and compete with their indigenous merchant class a situation that had produced in several parts of Java anti-Chinese violence within a short period after the end of the pass system.[5] We do not know yet how the abolition of the pass system might have impacted both the economic and the social life of the Kwee family (or whether the pass system applied at all to this elite family?) But for sure, more than his father, Kwee Zwan Liang could be said to be belonging entirely to a new century that demanded Java's Chinese making a new place for themselves.

Zwan Liang also lived in the era of the Ethical Policy, which was intended by the colonial government partly to dislodge ethnic Chinese from the protection of the state and to open a path for the formation of indigenous bourgeoisie. Meanwhile, the peranakan Chinese also encountered an unprecedented wave of migration of "totok" ("pure Chinese") from China – a cultural community from which the peranakan ambiguously sought distance.[6] Unprotected and yet dependent on the political culture of the colonial state and faced with the social realities of different groups and political temperaments of the time, members of Zwan Liang's generation would have to reinvent themselves in new ways.

Within this changing social and political environment, there were thus chances to articulate different social and economic network, and there were opportunities to displace colonial stereotypes and replace them with different set of identities – ones that would allow them to negotiate with the changing social conditions within which they were embedded. Yet, while the Chinese population were freed from their enclave and were no longer required to remain "Chinese" in their public appearance, they were in no way escape from the glasshouse of the colonial state. It was in the 1890s too that colonial officers and scholars, fearing the effect of nationalism under Sun Yat Sen's aegis, were beginning to seriously study the "Chinese" in the Indies. Along with the formation of knowledge about Chinese life and behaviour was the establishment of a special bureau staffed with sinologists to monitor the "movement" of Chinese population especially the peranakan. To ensure control and to prevent the formation of Pan-Asian anti-colonial cultures, the colonial state initiated several social "rule and divide" programmes. It offered European legal status to ethnic Chinese who spoke Dutch and possessed certain amount of property. The Kwee family, I think, took up this offer and began to keep up their appearances as "European." Another programme included the provision of "Western" education for the children of well-off peranakan Chinese family – this was in response to the ethnic Chinese's earlier initiative of setting up Chinese-oriented schools. When Zwan Liang was five years old, the colonial state had already made available for his generation special Dutch-Chinese schools. It is very likely that youngsters of the Kwee family were all educated in this Dutch-Chinese school and this explains why

they could comfortably appropriate "European" cultures to redefine their own social decorum.

On the other hand, outside the discipline of the school, technologies of communication and market had been compressing the various worlds of the Indies and beyond. Advertisement, films, magazines, newspapers and fiction have come in tandem with telephone, radio, bridges, roads, automobile and new architecture.[7] We do not know yet how Zwan Liang led his life as a young man, but he was educated at the Koning Willem III with a major in chemistry – a field that had helped him run the laboratory of the family's sugar factory.[8] We do not know how he was like as a manger and what kind of research and experiment he had conducted in the lab, but he developed an interest in photography and film (as well as car mechanics) and at a later stage of his life, he turned his family and his social environment into a lab for the construction of memories and familial identities at the time when political changes reconfigured Indonesia. We do not know how he came to be interested in camera and in depicting his family life, but by then like many others of his contemporaries, Zwan Liang had identified camera as the embodiment of modernity and a means to construct the twentieth-century cultures and identities of elite Chinese peranakan family. We do not know where and how Zwan Liang learned photography, but he clearly had shown mastery over the medium. His work reveals that he was fully aware of the photographic traditions of his time. As we have seen, many of his photographs followed the convention of representation of both formal and candid photography, but he had also extended the force of the convention by incorporating different traditions as well as evading some of them.

In what ways could we see the camera, the snapshots, and the photo album as a device to represent his ecology and to cope with the rapid changing social and political circumstances within which the peranakan elite family was embedded? Time flowed much faster in the twentieth century and in a way we could say that Zwan Liang's camera, helped to speed up the movement of time. The home videos taken during the operation of the sugar factory (before the Great Depression), showed the engagement of the family members with things and activities associated with modernity and productivity. Their family house and the factory in Djatti Piring were represented alongside images of tennis court, swimming pool and cars. There were many images of gardening and fishing that came in tandem with activities of planting, harvesting and transporting sugar.

The link between "modernity," sugar factory and ethnic Chinese deserves further comment. Historically, Chinese people could be seen as early pioneer of the industry. They had provided expertise and technology for the sugar production since the seventeenth century.[9] In the early twentieth century, they even ordered new machine directly from Europe.[10] Historian Roger Knight

points out that "the first Java sugar factory to fully electrify its operation was Chinese-owned" and that was in 1927.[11] As far as we are concerned, the historical connection between ethnic Chinese and the sugar industry is of particular importance since colonial sugar manufacturers (regardless of whether they are people of Dutch or Chinese descents) often considered themselves as "vanguard of progress" and in the early twentieth century their life styles were often associated with "modernity."[12] Sugar production was indeed connected to money, new machine, electricity, lab, communication, time management, calendar, automobile, swimming pool, tennis court, new houses and excursion (after a round of factory operation) – a constellation of things that were associated with "modernity." The point here is that if the sugar industries occupied a prominent place in the imagination of the modern and the history of the elite peranakan Chinese family are historically connected to it, then we could suggest that the Chinese elite pearanakan family probably had never considered themselves as lagging behind the Dutch even as the latter hold political power in the colony. It might not be surprising therefore that, in the family album, very few images are shown of the white European population. The relative invisibility of Europeans in both the home videos and family photo albums of the Kwee family indicates to us not only the fact of social segregation characteristic of Dutch colonialism, but also the sense that their engagement with modernity did not need to go through the Dutch.

Given the pioneering involvement of Chinese in the sugar industries, we could say that when members of the Kwee family looked up to Europe for new technologies, artistic ideas and products they did so with the knowledge that they were engaging with transnational modernity, something that is larger than the Dutch. The modernity that the members of the family identified with carried more than two flags. They wore outfits of the most recent style from Paris and they also appropriated the latest fashion from Shanghai, the finest design of Javanese kebaya and the latest kimono model from Japan. The prestigious position of sugar industry (and the sign of modernity attached to it) must have had a profound impact on the subjectivity of the members of the Kwee family and their self-representation in the family album. We could thus say that the photographs taken during the era of sugar factory could be seen as an attempt to produce, in the new time, an elite culture associated with the long standing prestige of sugar factory in the Indies.

However, in 1932, by the time Zwan Liang was in his thirties and five years into his visual collection, the Great Depression forced the family to close down the factory and sell it off to a bank. Given the sugar factory was the main source of wealth and identity of the family, the end of the factory era must have a profound effect on the subjectivity of the Kwee family. If the sugar industry is tied to the idea of modernity and family business, we wonder how the collapse of the industry, which had brought family members

together, might have affected the way in which Zwan Liang subsequently pictured his extended family and composed his family album. It seems to me that the pre-war photographs were composed only years after the closing down of the factory. How did the closing down of the sugar factory actually impact the self-representation of the family? Could we say that the rupture in the economic life of the family was recuperated in the family album by ways of a visual narrative that emphasizes the continuation of family bonds?

We do not know how the extended family managed their economic base in the post-sugar factory, but they seemed to continue to sustain their image as the "vanguard of progress" in the way they did before the Depression. In the following years, the extended family continued to live together even after they had moved to different places. They often visited each other as if nothing had happened, but it was clear, I think, at least to Zwan Liang that social and economic instability was the norm of the time. The Great Depression, the systematic estrangement of the peranakan elite businesses, the shrewd divide and rule politics of colonial government, the rise of anti-colonial Indonesian nationalism, and later Japanese occupation and Indonesian revolution might have contributed to the sense that social realities and the march of history would eventually undermine and erode the past, the present as well as the future image of the once closely knitted family. While the family members were once bond to each other by property, responsibility and blood, such bond had been subjected to change and within this context, the arrangement of the photos in the family album (which was presumably composed in the post-war era) might have reconstituted the desire for that disappearing bond.

Structured chronologically following the flow of time, the Kwee family album could be seen as moving down the stream of time as well as moving against it. The obsession with the family bonds, which would presumably bring back the sense of property, responsibility and connection, seems to counter the flow of time. We do not know when Zwan Liang started to compile the photos in the well-managed album, but he reassembled the fragments that tell just such a story of bonding, glorifying it even as this expression of network and heavenly place at once concealed the reality of dependence on the forces and resources beyond the family. The photos, when glued together in the family album, constituted the immortality of the family bond or better a desire for a visual immortality of family bonds.

Yet, if the photograph and the family album continued to stamp such sense of permanency, they also speak of unexpressed ambiguity, instability and vulnerability of family life at the time of change. Perhaps it was also against the sense of vulnerability of family ties in the time of rapid change that Zwan Liang's photographs represented just the strength of such ties. While the photographs might be a product of snapshots – with all the different meanings embedded in every shot – the arrangement of the photographs in the family

album constitutes a visual history, which aims at preserving a tie threatened by the rapid change of social and political relations. The end of Dutch colonial rule, the Japanese occupation and Indonesian revolution seem to have turned the snapshots of the past attainable only in the family album.

Zwan Liang died in 1959. It is not known where. He did not leave us any memoir or writing describing his own comparative view of the *pre-* and *post-*war time he and his family went through, but he did respond to it via his construction of an ideal happy world of the family. Perhaps no words are needed for none would be capable of conveying the truth and illusion of photographs. Today's researchers could only contextualize the past work of Zwan Liang against the history of pre- and post-war Java and thorough the oral history of his descendants who inherited the photographs and, of course, through the interests and questions of researchers themselves.

Yet, there could never be a conclusion when one read a photograph. Family photographs, perhaps like other photographs, are merely starting point for recollection and memory works. It is true that photographs are evidences but they are evidences to be solved, for there is no final or single answer to what the photograph is evidence of. We do not know what memories have been produced by the family members who have looked at the photographs and what would be the status of the photographs when they are viewed by the public today. Photographs are capable of being read in a number of ways even as they are read by the family members. They always point us to something else, or better, to many more things. We could move the photographs of Kwee family beyond their personal responses and towards a consideration of the photographs' broader cultural and historical grounds even as this direction is merely one among many other possible directions. In the end, the values of Kwee family photographs lie not in the image's truth claim but in the activity of discussion, reflection and learning among those who look at them. The notes contain in this chapter intend to do just this practice of developing a critical consciousness of the past as well as the present within which we, as readers, are currently embedded.

NOTES

1. The primary material in this chapter, the Kwee Private Photo Albums, is kindly provided by Peter Post in 2006 on behalf of the copyright holders (The Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD) and Kwee Kiem Han) as we embarked on Dr Post's research programme on ethnic Chinese Indonesian. Information on the Kwee family is largely built on communications with Peter Post and Koh Keng We, who have done extensive oral history with Kwee Kiem Han, in Amsterdam. I would like to thank Peter Post and Koh Keng We for introducing the Kwee family photo

albums and home movies and for allowing me to use many of their findings. Their research and discussion on the materials have enabled the writing of this chapter. Inaccuracies and mistakes in identification and interpretation of the contents of the photos are mine. An earlier version was presented in a workshop organized by Peter Post for NIOD on "Regime Change and Cultural Dynamics: Family, Networks and Representations: New Approaches to the Study of Indonesian Chinese Life in Southeast Asia and Beyond, 1920s–1970s" at Kyoto University's Center for Southeast Asian Studies (July 1, 2006).

2. Peter Post (by e-mail, 2016) indicates that the factory was bought by Kwee Boen Pien in 1873 and upon his death inherited by his son Kween Keng Liem in 1884. Some photos were taken by Zwan Liang's brother-in-law, Han Tiauw Bing, which explains why Zwan Liang is often seen in the albums; See also Post, "The Kwee Home Movies."

3. There are several books, besides Strassler's *Refracted Vision,* that have helped me to think about family photo albums, such as, Hirsch, *Family Photographs*; Hirsch (ed.), *The Familiar Gaze*; Kuhn, *Family Secrets*.

4. Wue, "Essentially Chinese."

5. For a discussion on the establishment of a new relationship among the colonial state, ethnic Chinese and Javanese organizations in early twentieth-century Indonesia, see: Shiraishi, "Anti-Sinicism."

6. For a discussion of the totok and the peranakan Chinese businesses, see: Twang, *The Chinese Business Elite*.

7. Mrazek, *Engineers of Happy Land.*

8. Post, "The Kwee Family Movies."

9. Knight, "Sugar, Technology and Colonial Encounters," 234; Blusse, *Strange Company*, 15–34; 73–96.

10. Knight, ibid., 235.

11. Knight, ibid., 235.

12. Knight, ibid., 231.

Part III

VISIONARY/(IN)VISIBILITY

Chapter 6

Developers

Indonesia, like other nations in the region, faces profound challenges from population growth in its major urban centres. The city of Jakarta, for instance, since independence has been grappling with problems of urbanization, which has overwhelmed the administration and planning efforts of the city. We have heard a lot of complaints about the incapacity of the city government to deal with the challenges and some of the mixed feelings about the current administration led by Governor Basuki Purnama or Ahok, an ethnic Chinese.

It is easy to forget, however, that in the first quarter of the twentieth century, when the Dutch was still in control, the newly established municipality already had problems with planning the city. It is also important to recognize that there was no planning (in the sense of comprehensively planning the city) during colonial time. "Planning" only existed partially and discursively in some areas mostly for the government to show authority and the European elites to match their social status. The space for the rest of the majority population was largely left unplanned even as there were interests and attempts to govern every aspect of natives' lives.

Today, the power to shape space is in the hands of capital and developers. The over two decades of the "age of capital" under the rule of Suharto's Indonesia have changed almost everything concerning the urban form of Jakarta.[1] In these decades, a group of ethnic Chinese property developers played a major role in urban spatial transformation.

In this chapter I consider the roles of ethnic Chinese developers in transforming the urban space of Jakarta since the 1970s, when the New Order of Suharto encouraged economic growth through home ownership and property business. Such policy – central to the formation of domestic capital – took advantage of the urban conditions of Jakarta, its poor infrastructure, inadequate housing provision and lack of planning. I will show how ethnic

Chinese property developers led the private housing industry, promoting its growth but at the same time also contributing to environmental degradation and social inequality in the city. This chapter was originally written in Indonesian to show the "contribution" of ethnic Chinese developers to Jakarta and Indonesia. I thus highlight the agency of individual developers while locating them within the development of the country's political economy, of which they are a part.

A few caveats. Given the focus of this book on ethnic Chinese, this chapter excludes non-ethnic Chinese (indigenous) developers who are increasingly dominating property business with the scale as large if not larger than ethnic Chinese developers. As reported in *Properti Indonesia* from 1994 to 1998, Bakrie, through his Bakrieland, for instance, at one point controlled over 12,000 hectares of residential land, 213 hectares of land for hotel and resort and 53.5 hectares of land in the central business area of Jakarta, which has been developed into superblock Rasuna Epicentrum. Other developers such as Sudwikatmono and Budi Brasali were reported in 1998 as controlling 5,500 hectares of land in Cikarang Baru. Meanwhile, Bambang Trihatmodjo (the son of President Suharto) with Kwee Swie Teng in 1996 controlled 30,000 hectares of land (of which 10,500 hectares were later on acquired by Bakrie) to be developed into Jonggol Asri, a new town. This chapter also excludes professionals in the field of real estate who are working behind the developers in strategizing and managing the companies. And finally this chapter excludes many ethnic Chinese developers, big and small, as the intention is not so much to cover every one of them but to show what ethnic Chinese and real estate business have done to each other.

THE FIELD

In Indonesia, the field of real estate is associated with the private sector (not the government) in charge of providing housing largely for the upper-middle-class population. Developers sell houses to those who are able to purchase a house in an area that is relatively well planned. Since the 1990s, they have transformed a significant part of the city space and the areas surrounding the urban centre into clusters of upper-middle-class residential neighbourhoods, a transformation unimaginable 20 years ago. The properties they developed are variously called "perumahan real estat" (real estate housing), "kota baru" (new town), "kota satelit" (satellite town), or "kota mandiri" (autonomous town), all of which are presented using dreamy slogans such as "Taman Harapan Indah" (Beautiful Garden of Hope), "Pantai Mutiara" (Pearl Beach), and so on.

The idea of new towns, however, is not an invention of postcolonial Indonesia. A similar kind of new town, but smaller in scale, already existed in the

colonial time. The "Indies town planners" (as they were called) constructed several new elite housing complexes for Europeans and local elites, such as Darmo housing in Surabaya (1916), Bandoeng Utara in Bandung (1917), Niew Tjandi in Semarang (1917), Menteng (1918) and Kebajoran Baru (1948) in Batavia/Jakarta. Subsequently, under the government of Sukarno, the Public Works Department working with foreign agencies planned a series of mixed-income neighbourhoods in Pulo Mas, Grogol, Slipi, Tebet and Cempaka Putih, even though not all of them were realized.

The idea of new towns thus is not new. What is new is the scale and dominant role of private sector in producing upper-middle-class housing with the support of government in the form of land acquisition and issuance of land permits. Real Estate industries thus could be seen as a creation of Suharto's New Order. The new regime that started in 1966 followed the prescription of World Bank to increase home and land ownership as engine for economic growth. In 1972 the government established a business association called Real Estate Indonesia (REI) to support developers to build housing for the upper middle class. Few years later, in 1975, a national housing company called PERUMNAS was created to build houses for the lower middle class, especially civil servants. Meanwhile, the relatively poor population and workers in the informal sector are left to find accommodation in kampung housing, most of which were built on informal land market. They built or rent "self-help" housing in kampung often by enacting the tradition of mutual help (gotong royong) and only some of the neighbourhood received support through World Bank's sponsored improvement programme. This "division of labour" along the line of class and power in the production of housing constitutes a housing system in Indonesia. In this system, real estate with its target on the upper middle class is an engine at the forefront of economic growth.

LOCATION PERMIT AND THE BIRTH OF REAL ESTATE

The history of Indonesian real estate could be said to have started in 1972 when the government issued two kinds of permits for developers to acquire and develop land into property market.[2] The permits have released the right to own land (*hak milik*) when it is purchased via developers. The first permit is called *Surat Ijin Penunjukkan Penggunaan Tanah* (SIPPT) known popularly as *Izin Lokasi* (Location Permit), which has allowed developers to acquire land for property development, especially housing. The second permit, in relation to the first, is called *Surat Izin Hak Guna Bangunan Induk*, a Holding Permit that allows developers to hold on to the land they have acquired for as long as 30 years. During this time the land should be developed into a property to be sold with the certificate of ownership, but in practice the 30-year

limit is never enforced as renewal is possible and developers tend to use this legal looseness for land banking. In any case, these two permits have become the foundation for the construction of real estate business and they have served as the basis for land privatization and effectively displaced the authority of the 1960 Basic Agrarian Law, which stated the social function of land.

As will be discussed further via individual developers, the application of Location Permit in the 1970s and the subsequent deregularization of banking sector in the 1980s and 1990s have enormous impact on not only the growth of real estate business, but also the change of space in the city and the surrounding region. For illustration, by the end of Suharto regime, in 1996, the head of the State Land Agency (BPN) discovered that 121,000 hectares Location Permit for developing housing had been issued from his office to developers. The heads of the Agency was shocked by what his office has done for he knew perfectly well that it would be impossible for developers to clear and then use this huge repository of land within the period allowed by the permit. And, meanwhile, banks too were surprised that they had issued a loan of 37.1 trillion rupiah related to property business.[3] The accumulation of land is clearly an attempt for land banking. But there is nothing the Land Agency could do except to stop issuing more Location Permit. But by then, it was all too late, as developers have already acquired enough land and time to keep their business going for many years to come.[4] It is important to note that a massive land acquisition at one time would often involve political network, for instance the collaboration between Bambang Trihatmodjo (Suharto's son) and Kwee Swie Teng (Indonesian name Tjajadi Kumala), the owner of Kaestindo Group, was able to acquire 30,000 hectares of land to build a new city at Jonggol. If it was not stopped by the 1997 monetary crisis, this project would have displaced 24 villages in 3 districts in the areas of Bogor and Cianjur.[5]

As part of the formation of Suharto's New Order, the development of big property developers thus could not be separated from the oligarchic regime. And one could say that it is within the Suharto New Order and its legacy that ethnic Chinese developers have grown even though they represent themselves, some more successful than others, as independent entrepreneurs whose achievements are attributed to their professionalism outside the power of the oligarchic state. Yet, is there something particular about ethnic Chinese developers that have made them the pioneers of real estate industries? Perhaps there is a tradition in the ethnic Chinese community in property business even though none of the current developers was a land owner prior to entering the business in the 1970s? Perhaps the ethnic Chinese were more able to generate capital (via their ties to overseas capital) needed for their property business? This chapter seeks to open up some questions concerning how

ethnic Chinese property business (not unlike those of indigenous developers) has survived the Suharto era.

EARLIER PIONEERS?

Before the real estate institution was established formally (through the setting up of an association and the issuance of permits as pointed out earlier), there were individuals already discursively engaged in property business though of a limited scale. Traces of this could be found in scattered media reports and personal accounts. For instance in 1970, a magazine indicated that "Some freelancers (*orang parikelir*) seem to be interested in buying and selling old houses. For them, buying and reselling land and houses in crowded and strategic places are very profitable."[6] Soetjipto Nagaria (Liong Sie Tjin, 1940–), a property developer, once recalls that in 1971 when he started his property business by building some luxurious houses that he could rent to expatriates, the land was owned by "famous property businessman called Wong Tao Fen."[7] We don't know who Wong is, but for sure he had been in the property business long before Nagaria. The history of Wong and the *orang parikelir* who bought and resold land and houses are largely unknown to us for there is no research yet has been done on them, but they seem to be the earlier pioneer of property business. Their business back then was limited to a few houses or just a building, and scalar concepts such as "town," "neighbourhood" or "settlement" central to real estate development were still non-existent.

In a way, today's famous property developers all seem to have started as orang parikelir, buying and reselling or renting out one or two buildings. Anton Haliman (Thiong Sit Lim, 1926–1999) founder of Agung Podomoro Group, started his career in 1968 with purchasing a land of 1.5 hectare in Kebayoran Lama before he moved on to developing the estate in the Sunter area. Ciputra (Tjie Tjin Hoan, 1931–), Soetjipto Nagaria (Liong Sie Tjin, 1940–) and A Guan (Guo Zaiyuan, 1951–) also started as orang parikelir. For instance, Ciputra, via, Pembangunan Jaya, a company associated with the city government, built an apartment building in Jakarta, called Djakarta Building, to accommodate foreign investors and dignitaries. Ciputra used credits given by Dutch's agency via Development Bank for Indonesia.[8] Ciputra's initiative was made possible by the opening up of door to foreign investment, which marked the rise of Suharto's New Order. A Guan's Agung Sedayu Group first started as a contractor company building shophouses in the early 1970s before receiving recognition among developers in the 1990s through his pioneering Harco Mangga Dua, the first specialized shopping mall with a focus on electronic goods.[9] His concept, which was developed later on to become one-stop-living "superblock," was soon replicated by other developers.[10] These earlier

discursive movements indicate that these ethnic Chinese property developers were not born into land-owning families and they were only integrated into a real estate business after the government formulated its policy to privatize lands, which had also opened up a possibility for them to acquire large plots of lands for property development. How the property business of ethnic Chinese intertwined with the political cultures and economic of the state is the subject of the following section.

POLITICS AND BUSINESS

In Indonesia, land has a double meaning, as reflected in the 1960 Basic Agrarian Law. On the one hand, land embodies the moral economy of the state so that it would be subjected to the state (not individual) control. On the other hand, land is also seen as a commodity central to the accumulation of capital. The New Order reconciled this contradiction by working together with the enterprise to commodify land as part of the moral economy of the state to develop the country. Homeownership and its concomitant production of "middle class" are thus seen as the embodiment of "development," a crucial aspect of nation-building. Developers thus often use the language of nation-building in their advertisement of properties as if to reconcile the contraction embedded in the meaning of land. It is in this context that politics come into play, and when ceaseless accumulation of capital requires massive land acquisition and practices of land banking, politics and business could not be more closely linked.

The success of ethnic Chinese developers during Suharto era thus was often (though not always explicitly) linked to a network of business relationships that involved the head of the state, and its oligarchic regime. For instance, Ciputra's move from being an architect engaging in a relatively modest property business in collaboration with the city government to a major developer was due in no small measure to his deal-making with Sudono Salim (Liem Sioe Liong), whose relation with the Cendana family (referring to President Suharto's circle) had allowed him to monopolize a number of economic sources. In the mid-1980s the Salim group entered the property business. Having no prior experience in property business, the group recruited Mochtar Riady (Lie Mo Tie, 1929–) and Ciputra (Tjie Tjin Hoan), who was chosen for his expertise in architecture and urban design. Together they formed PT Metropolitan Kencana, which was able to acquire and develop a 720 hectares land and turned it into "Pondok Indah," the first exclusive upper-class housing complex equipped with 24-hour security guards at the gate.

Jakarta then was not only a site of city and nation-building, but also a ground of competition over power and representation. Liem's decision to get involved in the Pondok Indah project might well have been just a business

decision, but a consideration of some aspects of Indonesian politics reveals how business and politics intersected in the time of Suharto. Prior to his collaboration with Liem, Ciputra worked quite closely with the governor of Jakarta, Ali Sadikin (who was appointed by Sukarno), through the city government construction company, Pembangunan Jaya.

Ali Sadikin was an influential leader with great capacity to mobilize resources to build Jakarta. He worked not only with Ciputra (who was appointed director of Pembangunan Jaya) but also Endang Wijaya (known as Acai) who was developing a 500 hectare Pluit.[11] He was also a popular leader and rumours circulated that he could become the next president. If the rumour was true, we could say that President Suharto found himself in rivalry with the charismatic Governor who had become more popular than the president. It has never been clear whether there were more to Suharto's jealousy of Sadikin's popularity, but tensions existed between Suharto and Sadikin. While it is hard to establish evidence about their tensions, but during one of my recent field trips, I heard a story about the implication of Sadikin–Suharto tension on ethnic Chinese like Ciputra and Acai who worked for Sadikin.

The story I heard indicates that Suharto was trying to show his muscle to Sadikin. And he did so by making an attempt to "discipline" Ciputra and Acai, two of the most important builders of Jakarta at that time. This still undocumented conflict between Suharto and Ali Sadikin had ended the career of Acai. Few years later, Acai found himself in jail and his business came to an end. Ciputra on the other hand was able to seek protection from Liem who in turn asked for a cut in the development of Pondok Indah. The Sukarto–Sadikin conflict became a blessing in disguise for Ciputra. He ended up starting a new business relationship with Liem. The political and financial support from Liem had made Pondok Indah the most expensive housing property at the time and a model of housing complex for other developers since then.

To the end of time, Ciputra's career has become unstoppable. He gives most of his credits not to political circumstances, but to his entrepreneurial spirit as if this could exist outside sociopolitical context. Ciputra is not only good in "serving" the city he has helped to build. He portrayed himself as a hardworking horse willing to be ridden by all governors of Jakarta. This dedication won him important positions. The state Coordinator of National Housing Board (Badan Koordinasi Perumahan Nasional – BPKN) appointed him the first chairman of the Indonesia's Real Estate Association (Real Estate Indonesia – REI), which he initiated. This association has become a powerful apparatus as almost only through membership, developers could expect success in their business. It seems clear to everyone in the business that membership of REI is an unwritten requirement to ease the process of getting Location Permit, a single most important document, to start property business. Ciputra is also a master of representation. He sponsored *infopapan* (housing info) magazine

and then transformed it into *Bisnis Properti*, which serves as a mouthpiece of real estate industry and arena for promotion of developers' projects.[12] He is also aware of the mentality of the middle class, especially the new riches, and the political elites who look up at the fashionable West. Ciputra thus often brought into the attention of the city government ideas he picked up from travelling abroad, including the idea of forming an urban council (dewan kota) which would give more power to people, especially developers, to manage the city.[13] In the 1990s, he managed to become President of FIABCI (Fédération Internationale des Administrateurs de Biens Conseils et Agents Immobiliers), an international federation of real estate developers, which gives awards to its members' projects.[14] FIABCI's award-winning projects from Indonesia were often acknowledged by the city government as best projects without questioning their socio-environmental consequences.

Ciputra's entrepreneurship inspired his fellow property developers who learned from him the importance of professionalism, but many of them lack one or two components of his skill. For some business tycoons who wished to enter property business, they would find it beneficial to partner with Ciputra. In the early 1980s, the king of pulp industry, Eka Tjipta Widjaja (Oei Ek Tjhong) of Sinar Mas, collaborated with Ciputra, who then invited Anthony Salim, the son of Liem Soe Liong, to work together. The three of them put together lands that have acquired out of their Location Permit. On the way, they invited more developers to join in, including Sudwikatmono, (cousin of Suharto) and by 1984 a consortium was formed that eventually produced Bumi Serpong Damai (BSD) (Serpong's Peace on Earth), a 6,000-hectare mega new town project in Serpong, some 25 kilometres south-west of Jakarta. BSD has attracted other developers (who began to acquire the surrounding leftover land) and professionals including planners (who are keen to put their planning theories into practice). Jo Santoso, a planner, recalls how enthusiastic he was, upon returning from Germany with postgraduate degree in planning, asked to take part in the physical planning of BSD (see chapter 8).[15] He designed a series of mixed-income neighbourhoods with connection to the rural surrounding, a concept that he thought was Javanese in concept and was totally different from the exclusive "gated communities" of Pondok Indah or Pluit.[16] Santoso's design, however, was never put into practice as housing for the lower-income population would not be as profitable for a new town aimed at accommodating a growing middle-class population. BSD nevertheless started from smaller units, but as land prices went up, the larger units were built, and this too ended the dream of the lower class to find a place in BSD.

BSD has grown to cover 14,000 hectares and the surrounding areas are favourite spots for other developers to obtain Location Permit. Pockets of lands around BSD are now owned by different developers who started to build

mini-BSDs, with high-rise condominiums, others are kept as pools of land bank for future development. Those who purchased the land earlier are now developing properties around BSD, such is the case with Summerecon. In 1992, Soetjipto Nagaria recalls, his company immediately looked at Serpong. By then "over 10,000 hectares in the area had already been planned not only by BSD, but also by Lippo Karawaci, Alam Sutera, Melati Mas and so on which have even started some construction."[17]

It should be noted that prior to deregulation at the end of 1980s, it was not always easy for developers to obtain loans from bank for land acquisition. Developers then formed consortium to pool together their Location Permits, as in the case of BSD. Or they have to mobilize their own social network, which would allow them to access credits from banks in foreign countries. Summerecon then, for instance, in 1976 received credits from a bank in Hong Kong, and Japanese Bank Daiwa Perdania Jakarta branch.

There were also other ways, such as embracing the state and the military in order to obtain capital for business. On this, Sugianto Kusuma (AGuan) and Tomy Winata (Oe Suat Hong, born 1958) have their own history. In the early 1980s Tomy worked with AGuan, and by 1985 they managed to run Bank Propelat owned by the army of Siliwangi Division, which they soon turned into Bank Artha Graha (literally means the "house of money"). From that point on, Artha Graha Group was managed by Suharto's family (via Bambang Trihatmodjo) and Yayasan Kartika Eka Paksi, a foundation associated with the military.[18] With the state and the military behind them, the Artha Graha Group registered their presence in the Jakarta's urban space. Through one of their subsidiaries, PT Danayasa Arthatama, the group sought to transform the central part of Jakarta into a "new Manhattan." They hired Australian architect Philip Cox and Singapore's CIME International to conceive the concept of super-block, which would make the Sudirman area "the first and largest integrated development in Indonesia."[19] They managed to clear 2.5 million square metres, and in June 1992, several ministers and high officials from the military circle as well as the governor of Jakarta, Lieutenant General Wiyogo Atmodarminto, launched the project, which cost 7.5 trillion rupiah.[20] This megaproject right in the centre of the city could only be carried out with huge capital, and strong military and political support not less because it had to displace many kampungs that had grown in the city. All the cases above illustrate the many different ways in which real estate business intertwined with various streams of politics.

Deregulation

The relationship between ethnic Chinese, business and politics entered another chapter with the deregulation of the banking system. Towards the

end of the 1980s, the government deregularized the banking sector, making the economic strategy more in line with World Bank's structural adjustment. This policy opened up a space for property developers to open their own bank to finance their own business. Meanwhile, local and foreign banks mushroomed and many of them engaged in the booming property business. By the mid-1990s, property speculation has gone crazy. Every year property values increased as much as 30% while banks charged 20% interest on loans. These two businesses sustained each other in their almost unlimited possibility (of speculating ways) to accumulate capital under unregulated flexible institutional environment. Deregulation of bank was also followed by the liberty of issuing Location Permit as district heads and local governments were allowed to issue them often without coordination with the central Land Agency. Developers used this looseness to buy more lands almost without sense of limit. And unlike in the 1970s and the early 1980s when collaboration between developers was needed to accumulate land, by the 1990s they didn't feel the need any more to collaborate.

So lucrative was property business that as many as 15 other conglomerates immediately expanded their business territories to include real estate. All sorts of strategies ranging from alliances, merges and deals ensued that by 1995 the world of Indonesian real estate was dominated by only 10 major developers who controlled 70 percent of the land for housing in Jabotabek (Table 6.1).

From Table 6.1 we can identify the domination of ethnic Chinese developers. Ciputra was the largest holder of Location Permit (just behind Suharto's family via Bambang Trihatmodjo who eventually top the list by acquiring 30,000 hectares of land in Jonggol). For developers, land banking is not unethical. Instead it is considered a business strategy for the long-term survival and success of their enterprise. Smaller developers (including short

Table 6.1 The size of land acquired by developers towards the end of Suharto's New Order

1. Metropolitan (Ciputra, Liem and Riyadi) – 9,595 hectare (23.3 %)
2. Bumi Serpong Damai – BSD (Ciputra, Salim, Eka Tjipta and Sudwikatmono) – 6,000 hectare (14.6%)
3. Pembangunan Jaya (Ciputra) – 5,930 hectare (14.4%)
4. Lippo (James Riady) – 4,133 hectare (10%)
5. Sumarecon (Soetjipto Nagaria) – 4,020 hectare (9.7%)
6. Ciputra (Ciputra) – 3,955 hectare (9.6%)
7. Tigaraksa (Johny Widjaja) – 3,000 hectare (7.3%)
8. Putra Alvita Pratama – 2,000 hectare (4.9%)
9. Modern Land – 1,570 hectare (3.8%)
10. Kalbeland – 1,040 hectare (2.5%)

Total 41,243 hectare

Source: *Properti Indonesia* 1 April 1995; compare to info from *Tempo*, October 12, 1998.

term or opportunistic developers – who are locally called "cowboy" or "hit-and-run" developers) also participated in land banking (largely for up to 50 hectares). The logic behind accumulation of land is that land price tends to increase rapidly when it is short of supply, so land is like a gold mine (*tambang emas*). The more land one could own the richer one would become. The gain is higher than the risk, which often could be externalized to the state (when inflation hits) by simply declaring bankruptcy in the worst situation. Meanwhile, the bank continued to supply loans with high interest rate, while the state apparatus pocketed taxes and extra fees for issuing permits. Everyone seems to gain something. To deal with the high interest rate from the bank and higher taxes from the state, developers raised the price of the properties and targeted only those who were able to buy or invest. The implication is clear. The housing market would be dominated by upper-middle class properties. By the mid-1990s, the government policy of building six low-income houses and three middle-income houses for every one luxurious house had largely been ignored.

For big property businessmen, the 1990s was a decade of prosperity, but for others it was a decade of primitive accumulation marked by dispossession and abuse or neglect of regulations. There were developers whose main business was selling land, not houses. And there were those who specialized in buying and selling Location Permit. The government and the bank were reluctant to monitor, especially after Suharto's family joined the business. Property business then entered the domain of the untouchable, one that is perhaps too powerful to fail. Some believe that real estate industries played a major role in the eventual monetary crisis of 1997 and the concomitant May riots, which brought Suharto down.[21] When the government in 1997 sought to "discipline" property businesses with regulations, it was all too late. Asian financial crisis (to which property market contributed) had brought down property industries especially the smaller ones. Major developers, especially those with substantial land banking, were however able to manoeuvre by merging and deal-making among themselves and with the government especially. The president director of Agung Podomoro Land, Trihatma Haliman, indicates that "under that condition of global crisis, we let go (i.e. sold) three projects in order to complete two projects. . . . Once we have money again, we can always buy back those projects."[22] During the monetary crisis, many projects shifted hands from smaller developers to large developers.

The monetary crisis of 1997 has proven the fact that land banking (along with pre-construction selling and the developer's reputation) was crucial for survival in time of crisis. The survival of major developers, who have become big again in the time of post-Suharto Reformasi, was due in no small measure to their land bank during the Suharto era.

CRISES AS OPPORTUNITIES

The 1997 monetary crisis paralysed banks that were once served as the pillar of real estate funding in the 1990s. Many banks declared bankruptcy, and handed their enterprises to the state for "rehabilitation." Those that survived had learned the lesson and became cautious in supporting real estate business. Many property developers suddenly disappeared in order to escape from their responsibility. Yet some have returned to business few years later under new names. In 2001, three years after Suharto stepped down, and in the twenty-ninth anniversary of the REI, Theo Sambuaga, who was also Minister of Housing and Settlement, declared that "for the future, REI (-the real estate association) should not rely on connection, facility and protection (from political establishment). Instead, it should be an association that is independent and professional."[23] Sambuaga here emphasized professionalism, a practice that was felt to be missing (as outlined above) during the Suharto era. Similarly, Ciputra also declared that "we have learned a precious lesson which is that we shouldn't borrow too much money from bank. In the past so many new real estate companies borrowed so much money in order to invest heavily in property business. Furthermore so many banks competed with each to give loan. Now we all know the consequences of such practices."[24]

This statement came from Ciputra a few years after the whole real estate industry almost collapsed with the end of Suharto's power. Ciputra's own bank – Bank Ciputra – was sent to Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency (BPPN – established in 1998) for a rehab. If it were not because of his reputation and large land banking, Ciputra would have disappeared like many other (smaller) developers. How did Ciputra return to his business and become even more prosperous after the end of Suharto era? A standard explanation for his survival and success, not less by Ciputra himself, is due to his professionalism, entrepreneurial spirit and business strategy. Be that as it may, the huge land banking accumulated over many years during Suharto era played a major role in saving Ciputra's enterprise.

Land banking has long been a key activity of Ciputra Group. For instance, Harun Hajadi, Ciputra's son-in-law and key manager of his company, recalls that in 1988 when he just joined Ciputra Group, his first task was "to clear a land of 1,600 hectares in Surabaya which he completed in 1993."[25] In the post-Suharto era, the technique of land acquisition is rather different: "Our strategy now is to work with land owners. We would buy the land if they are willing to sell. If they prefer to become partner, we welcome them to join us. Everything is transparent, no cheating as can be seen though audit which can be done anytime at every level of the company. This is important as we take care of our brand, and the reputation of Ciputra. Integrity is our number one priority."[26]

We get a sense here that the resilience of a developer owes to not only his reputation, but also land banking. However, in post-Suharto era, land acquisition has become a challenging task, as lands have become a rare and expensive commodity. Furthermore, decentralization after the end of Suharto has displaced power into the hand of local governments, and this has made land at the peri-urban Jakarta more complicated to acquire.

Hendro Gondokusuma (Wu Duanhua, 1950–) from Dharmala Group, which was rehabilitated by BPPN and returned to business under a new name Intiland, points out that letting BPPN rehabilitate his business was a good decision. He didn't have to fire any of his staff. Instead they were asked to grow corn in many of their empty lands. "Can you imagine," he said, "the lands of Intiland are everywhere. We banked many lands. We asked our staffs to take care of them by planting corns, and they diligently made sure that no one would take over our land."[27] The capacity to guard their lands apparently had saved Intiland.

Agung Podomoro had a slightly different tactics in overcoming crisis. Trihatma Haliman, the boss, points out: "We have gone through a period of up and down. We have survived two economic crises, 1997 and 2008. We have coped well. After the 2008 crisis, we even expanded, and that is because crisis for us means buying (more lands)."[28] For Haliman, crisis is an opportunity. His company went to Karawang to take over property projects that were halted because of financial crisis. Haliman continues: "Just two months ago, we bought 40 hectares. We planted out flag, and soon, the price of the land has gone up three times. We then build houses. We are fixer. Look at Senayan City and Plaza Semanggi shopping malls."[29]

All major developers are aware of the change in the post-Suharto era. New strategies thus have emerged. The most important strategy was to maximize profits by densification of the land that they have acquired. They started to build superblock, a mix-used complex consists of hotel, shopping mall, offices and condominium.

SUPERBLOCK

In the 2000s, the central part of Jakarta was filled with a massive campaign by major developers to develop multipurpose building complex known as "superblock" (or *proyek multiguna*) – a concept that has been known since the Suharto era (see discussion on AGuan and Tomy Winata above). In 2003, *Properti Indonesia* reported: "One developer can offer several kinds of property development in a single location, just like a supermarket where one can buy everything. In Superblock, one can purchase a store, rent an office space or buy a living space (apartment). One will get all the services in just 'one

stop' at the marketing office."[30] With this concept of one-stop-service, superblock has made the planning idea of zoning obsolete. Instead of dividing a territory according to different functions and link them together by a system of transport, the superblock concept brings different functions, vertically and horizontally, together in one location. One can say that it is a manifestation of "time-space compression." There is a modernist idea of efficiency and self-sufficiency in the Superblok except that all the spaces are created for the upper-middle-class consumers.

For developers the reasons for superblock are less technical. First, they think that several properties when bundled together would strengthen each other. Together they would elevate the total value of the property. Second, the diversity of products in a superblock gives more choices and options to customers, and such diversification serves to minimize the risk of investing in only one product. Third, the degradation of the built environment, such as flooding, air pollution, chronic traffic congestion (which has made commuting an ordeal), and the "fear of the street," have made superblock a "solution" for urban living. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, is the issue of land and property ownership. After over 30 years of land acquisitions, not much land are left for incorporation or expansion, and those that are still available have become too expensive to acquire. The logical choice for developers then is to maximize the profit they could gain from their limited stockpile of land which they have acquired from the previous years.

The proliferation of superblock in the post-Suharto era could thus be seen as stemming from these few factors. It could be seen as the developers' strategy to come up with new "spatial products," which would drum up consumers' confidence in property market once again after a crisis. Looking across the superblock players, we could immediately identify old players who are quick in registering the presence of superblock as a new frontier for making profits in the aftermath of crisis. Only major developers (and most of them are remnants of the Suharto era) who survived the crisis are developing superblocks. Smaller developers won't be able to play the game as superblocks are expensive to build – five-star hotels with luxurious condo and high-end shopping malls. A commentary of Trihatma Haliman seems to represent the post-Suharto's real estate developers.

> After our success in building landed houses, we realize that land in Jakarta is becoming more and more scarce as a resource. Meanwhile, the chronic traffic jam and inadequate infrastructure have prompted us to put forward the concept of "back to the city." People have to live close to where they work to save transportation cost. Building affordable housing in the city will thus help to solve housing problem in the city. And in a situation of increasing land scarcity, we build highrise apartment for all classes in Jakarta.[31]

Figure 6.1 Central Park, a superblock developed by Agung Podomoro Group (Photo: A. Kusno).

While it is not clear how the high-rise apartment could reach the urban poor, projects branded under superblocks offer high-quality amenities. Lippo, through its St. Moritz, boasts about constructing "a city with global standard. . . . All are built with excellent quality of international standard the bench mark of which include Singapore, Hong Kong, New York, Tokyo. The aim is to offer *cosmopolitan living* and comfortable global city."[32] Unlike the Agung Podomoro Group, Lippo's did not mention that they would develop a superblock for every social class in the city.

Ciputra, who is developing Ciputra World Superblock in Jakarta and Surabaya, is perhaps more honest and clear about who actually are going to enjoy the global city of the superblock. The quality of Ciputra World is high and it intends to be above the rest. It aims for a gold or platinum award in "green property," but Ciputra also makes clear to fellow developers that "we all have to be responsible over this world of ours. If you want your building to be platinum, you can sell a bit higher. The first investment in green property is indeed more expensive, but its benefit for the world is big in the long run."[33] For Ciputra, buyers would need to pay higher to help accomplish "green property" to invest not only in their building, but also in the world.

Developers in the post-Suharto era are equally aggressive in branding their property development as the best product not only for the city, but also the nation. Hendro Gondokusuma, who is known for his waterfront property development, hired foreign architectural firm such as Atkins who designed the highest hotel in the world, the Burj al Arab in Dubai, to design its luxurious condo called Regatta at the waterfront of Jakarta.[34] Regatta has registered Gondokusumo as the developer of waterfront following the recognition he received in the Suharto era for the development of Pantai Mutiara exclusive housing on a reclaimed land. Developers of the post-Suharto have increasingly "brand" themselves and their reputation in the marketing of their property. They are more in competition with each other. It is not clear whether, in the post-Suharto era, developers would mobilize their "ethnic Chinese" identity as part of branding, but they are also in competition with other major non-Chinese developers of major superblock, such as Bakrie, who is an aggressive businessman with political ambition. But for sure, these major developers are now preparing for their next generation to take over their businesses. Their reputations are becoming more like a brand as the younger generation, their children and grandchildren are now holding important positions in the companies. Many of them were born with very little idea about the Suharto regime from which their father and grandfather had benefited.

THE THIRD GENERATION

In the 2000s, a new generation has emerged from within the establishment of ethnic Chinese developers. This generation, known as the third generation, consists of grandchildren of those we have encountered. The young ones include Michael Riady (1980–), the grandson of Mochtar Riady, who after a period of apprenticeship, is directing the superblock of St. Mortiz. The young Riady received education in Singapore, Indonesia and the United States. He has been procured perhaps as long as the land on which St. Moritz is standing today. As Michael Riady himself acknowledges: "We have bought the land in West Jakarta for some time already. And since it was not ready, we kept it as part of our land banking. This has been our strategy."[35] Consistent with the paradigm of "back to the city" St. Moriz is promoted as a "global city" even though it is (only) on 12 hectares land. In St. Moritz there will be a convention hall, seaworld, and the largest mall in Indonesia (450,000 square metres) surrounding eight apartment towers. These apartments would target younger people who just graduated, young professionals like Michael, young family as well as "everyone who likes the atmosphere of Singapore."[36] All these facilities are just part of the 11 facilities that will be built in one place.

If Michael Riady is given a portion considered suitable for his age, Michael Wijaya (1984–), four years younger than Michael Riady, has already been

appointed CEO of Sinar Mas Land by his grandfather Eka Tjipta Widjaya. Michael Wijaya controls the property business of Sinar Mas including the huge land stocks, all of which have been integrated under a single management called Sinar Mas Land. Michael Wijaya therefore is in charge of BSD and Duta Pertiwi and oversees 40 projects and over 10,000 hectares of land bank – land possibly enough to keep more than one generation busy. Meanwhile, the sons of Soetjipto Nagaria, Soegianto Nagaria (1972–) and Herman Nagaria (1976–) are content with improving the quality of the family property business. Nagaria has stocked lands since the 1980s. During that time, the founding father acquired 1,000 hectares in Serpong (and only half has been developed) and 250 hectares in Bekasi. Soetjipto recently stated that "only now the time has arrived" to develop them. Soetjipto has prepared his two sons to manage the two properties respectively. Soetjipto recalls that "in the past, lands are abundant, but today is a different situation. We can only work on 50 to 100 hectares at one time. We realize that the size of the land one can work with is no longer like before, which can be hundreds of hectares at once."[37]

Meanwhile, Utama Gondokusumo (1976–), the son of Hendro Gondokusumo, founder of Intiland Development is the family's executive director of business development. According to Utama, his task is "to direct Intiland to its future, what business to take on, what fast growing business trend for the location. . . . There are many new projects we are going to build on our own or with partners." Utama for sure is very busy. According to the president director and CEO of Intiland, Ho Kian Guan, Intiland has "2,400 hectares stock of land around Jakarta and Surabaya."[38]

What these young entrepreneurs are telling us is that they have been kept busy by their fathers and grandfathers on the lands the family has stocked during the Suharto era. Today, they are working within the context of land scarcity and their main task therefore is to maximize profit from the remaining stock of land. What this suggests in the end is that while post-Suharto real estate developers represent themselves as professionals and promote the big names of their founding fathers, their formation is still that of the New Order, which has made possible the banking of vast land. What then is left for the young generation? It is not clear to where our city will be taken, but urban environment is deteriorating while the urban majority – members of the working class population – hasn't yet got a place in the global "superblock" city.

WHAT IS CHINESE ABOUT PROPERTY BUSINESS?

This chapter has shown how the state and the ethnic Chinese are harnessing each other for their own interests. Since the opening up of Indonesia to the world-economy following the rise of Suharto to power, the state has

harnessed the economic network and the business skills of ethnic Chinese to generate both foreign and domestic capital. The state used their resources (and their politically pariah and minority position) in generating capital, while the ethnic Chinese (like other ethnic group) used the state to create the condition for their property business to grow. Here we see the intersection between the politically pariah minority status, capitalist subjectivity and the political economy of the Indonesian state.

Real estate was one of the fields that were released to help capital accumulation and at once help "solve" the need for housing. We thus see how capital accumulation and formation of property market are sharing the same contour, as they both developed under the notion of "development." But it is perhaps important to note that the "rise of capital" in Indonesia was represented as the rise of development as a new paradigm for nation-building (replacing at least in the mind of Suharto's New Order, the era of "revolution" under Sukarno). So when the government began to release Location Permit, which is a green card for the creation of property market and land privatization in the early 1970s, ethnic Chinese were most prepared to respond. And they responded to the invitation in the language of nation-building. They believed that their engagement in property market was an engagement in development and nation-building. If asked why they continue to build high-end shopping malls, they would say that it is for nation-building as instead of upper-middle-class Indonesians flying to Singapore for weekend shopping they could just spend their money in the Indonesian malls, which would boost domestic economy.

This chapter shows some aspects of how ethnic Chinese real estate developers have operated in the sociopolitical contexts of Indonesia under Suharto and the post-reform era. It shows not only the capacity of ethnic Chinese in this business, but also how their business is inseparable from the political economy of Suharto's Indonesia and the practice of land banking in Jakarta and other cities. It also indicates the construction of a regulatory system that facilitates accumulation of capital via land banking. This ecology of real estate business tells us nothing about the Chinese-ness of the developers, as it works for any ethnic group who is in property business. The specificity of ethnic Chinese, especially in the time of Suharto, unlike indigenous business groups, is that they did not have political power. They knew perfectly well that their businesses need to be "independent" enough to survive political instability. Efforts continue to be made, especially after the collapse of Suharto regime to collaborate with foreign corporations to jointly invest in property business.

Ethnic Chinese developers (more than other ethnic groups) have also been promoting their reputation and branding their names such as Ciputra who preaches entrepreneurialism. This promotion of entrepreneurship could be seen as an attempt to show that their achievement as having little to do with

the state. Instead what they have done is to develop the city (and thus the nation) which otherwise won't have the quality needed to put Jakarta on the map of world cities. We can see such understanding in the statement provided by Harun Hajadi from Ciputra Group: "For sure we provide a completely different environment, one that is green, sustained by adequate infrastructure, fully delivered to customers according to promises as represented by the drawings. Many developers delivered only beautiful drawings but the products are different. Ciputra Group always keeps its promise. We aim at building life, not just building a house."[39]

Such performance one could say is not exclusively dominated by Ciputra Group, other property developers have made attempts to satisfy customers, but in the historical context of ethnic Chinese as politically pariah minority, gaining trust from customers carries a lot of weight. In this sense, ethnic Chinese developers are pioneers and they are at the forefront in providing new standards, for better or worse. They imported ideas from the nineteenth century "Garden City" to concepts from Southern California real estate development; from American suburb to New Urbanism; from gated communities to superblock and green properties. Through these ideas they have improved the quality of life of their customers and the general urban population as well as contributing significantly to the degradation of both natural and social environment of the city.

THE SOCIAL

Finally, it is perhaps interesting to note that as individual developers evolved and grew, they tend to see themselves as a CEO of a corporation. They therefore are also picking up trends that they have learned from corporation especially in regards to social responsibility. One could trace the "generosity" of ethnic Chinese in the social life within which they are embedded and consider it as part of Chinese traditions, but the list below shows some activities related to giving back to community.

Ciputra is involved in at least 10 foundations working to improve the quality of education from the level of kindergarten to that of university even as they are largely private institutions. He is also supporting sports (such as chairing Jaya Raya Foundation which produces world class badminton players), art and culture (such as by being a patron of art galleries, museums and theatres) as well as donate funds to restore the literature library of HB Jassin in Taman Ismail Marzuki). He is also a share holder of a most respected Indonesian Journal, *Tempo*.

Soetjipto Nagaria contributed to the rebuilding of Pahoa School and participated in Bedah Kampung Program by upgrading some kampung

neighbourhoods and built 100 low-cost housing (rumah rakyat) in his Kelapa Gading real estate. Meanwhile, his Summarecon also built Depo Daur Ulang, a recycling facility in Kelapa Gading and the revenue gained from this facility is donated to Buddha Tzu Chi Foundation to coordinate social activities.

Meanwhile, AGuan also does not want to be left behind. After being touched by the 2002 major flooding in Jakarta, he started to be generous in donation. He is cleaning his hand, mind and heart by becoming a major patron of Buddha Tzu Chi Foundation. His protégée, Tomy Winata also does not forget to initiate Artha Graha Peduli (Artha Graha Care), which serves to help members of urban poor.

Eka Tjipta too through his Eka Tjipta Foundation initiated the idea of establishing Yayasan Dana Kesejahteraan Mandiri (YSDM) to generate funds to help poor people. Meanwhile, the Lippo Group, through its CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) unit, spreads education about health and the group takes part in improving health care facilities for the poor. Lippo Group is also building 12 hospitals in Eastern Indonesia, and every year gives scholarships to students from 10 universities all over the country. Lippo Group is also quite consistent in donation for natural disasters. In the recent flooding (in 2013), it dispatched 13 trucks of emergency aids to one billion rupiah to municipality to help with flood relief.

As with any CSR, it is never clear if positive contributions to society is part of corporate strategies when there are doubts that companies are being responsible towards social and environmental practices. While the contribution of ethnic Chinese developers could arguably be more than a token gesture of goodwill, their transformation of Jakarta and its surrounding have also contributed quite significantly to the deterioration of social and natural environments. It is probably too much to expect that real estate companies would resolve urban problems, but the new generation living under the social environment of post-Suharto time would need to think and act beyond their parents and grandparents who set up their business under Suharto New Order.

NOTES

1. Cowherd, “Cultural Construction”; Leaf, “Land Regulation.”
2. Aksoro, “Effects of the Location Permit”; Leaf, “Land Regulation.”
3. Cowherd, “Cultural Construction”; Leaf, “Land Regulation.”
4. Simanungkalit, *Rumah untuk Rakyat*, 88–89.
5. “Jonggol, Proyek Satu Abad”; Susanto, “Sentul Nirwana.”
6. As reported in a news column of *Ekspres*, October 31, 1970.
7. Li, *Pancaran Cahaya Tujuh Generasi*, 216.
8. (*Ekspres*, October 31, 1970), 8.

9. Ahira, "Agung Sedayu Group."
10. "Superblok."
11. Simanungkalit, "Prospek Proyek."
12. Cowherd, "Cultural Construction," 2002: 282–83.
13. "Perlu Dewan Kota."
14. "Fiabci: Swasta Harus Berperan."
15. Jo Santoso, interviewed January 30, 2013.
16. See also Santoso, "Bumi Serpong Damai."
17. Li, *Pancaran Cahaya Tujuh Generasi*, 290.
18. Aditjondro, *Korupsi Kepresidenan*, 73.
19. "At the Heart of Indonesia's Development."
20. "Tomy Winata"
21. Winarso and Firman, "Residential Land Development"; Dorleans, "Urban Land Speculation."
22. Kusumaputra, *Rahasia Sukses*, 28.
23. Sambuaga, "REI Tidak Boleh Berharap Previles lagi."
24. Ciputra, "REI Harus Tabah dan Yakin."
25. Kusumaputra, *Rahasia Sukses,* 63.
26. Kusumaputra, *Rahasia Sukses,* 65.
27. Kusumaputra, *Rahasia Sukses,* 100.
28. Kusumaputra, *Rahasia Sukses,* 20.
29. Kusumaputra, *Rahasia Sukses,* 25.
30. "Lima Faktor Jamin Investasi Aman."
31. Kusumaputra, *Rahasia Sukses,* 20.
32. Kusumaputra, *Rahasia Sukses,* 133.
33. Kusumaputra, *Rahasia Sukses,* 52–53.
34. Kusno, *After the New Order.*
35. As cited in Kusumaputra, *Rahasia Sukses*.
36. As cited in Kusumaputra, *Rahasia Sukses.*
37. Kusumaputra, *Rahasia Sukses,* 191.
38. Kusumaputra, *Rahasia Sukses*, 106–07.
39. Kusumaputra, *Rahasia Sukses,* 66–67.

Chapter 7

Architects

This chapter and the previous one on real estate were written on the invitation of Yayasan Nabil to consider the contributions of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia's nation-building.[1] They would become part of about 127 papers written by over 70 contributors about the roles of ethnic Chinese in different fields. The aim, as Mr Eddie Lembong, the initiator and founder of Yayasan Nabil, declares, is "not for self-glorification or blowing our own trumpet as if other ethnic groups were contributing less. That is not the aim. . . . Instead, the idea behind the book is to enable ethnic Chinese to reflect (as in looking at a mirror) and recognize their own faces . . . and (who knows materials could be used) to serve as a reference to write Indonesian national history."[2] In the manner of a "who-is-who" biographical account, the chief editor and noted scholar Leo Suryadinata, suggests a framework that contributors should "follow facts and refrain from offering opinions and as much as possible use historical perspective, i.e. chronology, from the past to the present."[3]

As a contributor, I followed the editor's suggestion and I also supported this project considering the importance of registering the history of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. I agreed to write about "architects" and I also volunteered to write about "real estate developers." The most challenging task for the chapter on architects is that (unlike developers) architects are not always publicly promoting their works and not all of them embrace "ethnic Chinese" as a category for identification. In fact several prominent architects whom I suspect and almost sure are ethnic Chinese could not be included in this essay because of the difficulty in establishing such identification. This in itself is (historically) interesting, as for Suryadinata it is very important that we make sure that the persons identified are really "keturunan Tionghoa" (Indonesian of ethnic Chinese descent). The point of reference is their Chinese name or the Chinese family name. Suryadinata makes it clear that "it is alright to not know the Chinese

name, as far as the family name (from father or mother side) is known."[4] With this framework, a presumably "ethnic Chinese" architect whose family name could not be established, is excluded from the list. I also encountered a situation where ethnic Chinese architects do not feel the need to identify themselves as ethnic Chinese (for various reasons), and I only included them when they don't seem to care. I excluded those I did not get any response regarding their ethnic Chinese identity.[5]

The contributions of ethnic Chinese in architecture have been "privately" recognized but they are rarely mentioned. This is largely due to the perception that the techno-artistic craft of the profession (much like other "engineering" profession) does not require identification of ethnicity – except perhaps for business relations. And, as discussed below, almost all of the architects' works have made no reference to architecture associated with Chinese identity. Prominent figures recognized by almost everyone in architecture, such as Han Awal, Gunawan Tjahjono, Johan Silas and Eko Prawoto, have never been associated with their ethnic Chinese background. It is nevertheless important, in the context of socio-historical marginalization of ethnic Chinese in Indonesian history, to consider their involvement in the formation of architecture in Indonesia. Such re-inscription entails the broadening of the discipline of architecture to include the social cultural field of the profession beyond its emphasis on building design. The aim is to counter the state and popular perceptions that ethnic Chinese only involve in the field of real estate (see chapter 7) and other techno-artistic professional worlds with little concern over the social and the cultural.

It is appropriate therefore to mention some more caveats. First, in order to emphasize the social and cultural contributions of ethnic Chinese in the expanded field of architecture, I largely exclude architect-designer as plenty of their works are already available in design magazines.[6] Second, architects included in this chapter are bounded by my limited knowledge and information that I could gathered. The information I got are also quantitatively (and qualitatively) uneven. Some information are more available than others leaving thus a text that devotes lengthy discussion on one individual and few lines on some others. The source of the information is also not always reliable as some are obtained through internet sources, others are by discursive and informal conversations over quite a long period of time. I hope nevertheless that what is presented here allows us to see some contributions from ethnic Chinese architects to Indonesian history. I am sure there are many more architects of Chinese descent who could be included (and perhaps many more who would prefer to keep their works private), but the aim of this chapter is to tease out the broad range of contributions by some identifiable individuals in the expanded field of architecture.

What do I mean by expanded field of architecture? As this chapter will show, ethnic Chinese architects have engaged in social and cultural fields such as involved in urban planning, institutional building, kampung improvement projects, conservation of historic buildings and cultivation of heritage associated with regional and national cultures. Many of them work in the university, the municipality, in the fields of NGOs and community-based organizations devoted to the urban poor even though many more are working in the construction industries and marketing offices of property developers as well as serving wealthy and powerful clients. We can see the diversity of ethnic Chinese in just this small but broad field of architecture. There is the first Indonesian architect trained under Dutch colonial condition; there are those who played important role in the establishment of professional association called *Ikatan Arsitek Indonesia* (IAI) [Indonesian Association of Architects]. There are those who have become respected educators, taught in universities and served the field of history and theory. There are those who were trusted staffs of Governor Ali Sadikin and worked under President Sukarno. There are those who pioneer new architectural movement; there are those who have become respected activists and public intellectuals, and advocates for the poor. And of course, there are those who work for major developers and the family of Suharto. All these indicate the diversity of ethnic Chinese in their course of contributing to nation-building, consciously or unconsciously for better or worse.

Writing this essay has also made me aware of some interesting and challenging issues that are inseparable from the historical context of Indonesia. First, Jakarta and Bandung seem to dominate the architectural scene of Indonesia. These two places produced noted architects and their works and the capital city is still the centre of architectural production. This Java-centric or Jakarta-centric indicates that most architects work in Java and Jakarta where capital and power are concentrated. It may also be that most information related to architecture is biased towards Java. This Java/Jakarta-centric situation calls for a future research with focus on other islands in Indonesia. Second, most of the architects mentioned in this chapter are graduates of three top schools: Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), University of Indonesia (UI) and Parahyangan University (Unpar), and many of them obtained their graduate and postgraduate degrees from Europe and the United States (via scholarship or support from family). This indicates a class dimension of architectural profession. Third, there is almost no information about woman architect (regardless of ethnic background) that I could include in this chapter. This is troubling partly because I remember when I was in architectural school in Surabaya and Jakarta, I observed in average half of over 100 students per year were female. Yet where have my female classmates gone after obtaining their architectural degree? This gender imbalance in the profession also indicates the patriarchal structure of Indonesian society as reflected in the

little opportunity available for female architects to work in the field. Lastly, if we extended the field of architecture to include builders, contractors and dealers of building materials, there could include more contributions of ethnic Chinese in Indonesian architectural history. For instance, Thio Tjoan Tek who built iconic buildings designed by Dutch architect Wolf Schoemaker and several art deco buildings at Dago Street in Bandung in the 1930s and 1940s. We would still need to document the contribution of someone like Thio Tjoan Tek and other ethnic Chinese builders such as Boen Joek Sioe, among others, to fully account for ethnic Chinese contributions to city building.[7]

Following the format of the book project, this chapter is structured chronologically from colonial era, to the time of Independence and the New Order as well as the post-Suharto time. Along the way, the chapter is organized around "who-is-who" under different themes covered by the expanding field of architecture.

COLONIAL MODERNITY

The name of Liem Bwan Tjie (1891–1966) emerged only recently in the history of Indonesian architecture.[8] During the Suharto era (1966–1998), his name was never mentioned in any book on Indonesian architecture even though Liem, as we now know, was the first Indonesian architect graduated from Delft Technische Hoogeschool. In the 1930s, Liem designed various modern-tropical houses in Semarang for mostly wealthy ethnic Chinese families. In 1947, he designed the house of President Sukarno and only in the 1950s, after the transfer of sovereignty from Dutch to the Indonesian state, he received commissions to design public buildings in Ambon, Medan and Menado. In 1959, he invited a small group of Indonesian architects to meet in his house in Bandung to formulate ideas and norms for the establishment of professional association for architects known today as the Indonesian Institute of Architects (IAI).

Liem Bwan Tjie was born into a wealthy family who had been living in Semarang for four generations. He grew up in a new era (of the "age in motion") when ethnic Chinese was no longer confined to their ethnic compound. The system of spatial segregation, which limited the movement of ethnic Chinese in the nineteenth century, had been abolished. Since the liberal period, Chinese businesses had become more integrated into the up and down of global market economy. And Indonesians from elite families had been allowed to study in Holland. Liem was the only son in the family who had the privilege of studying in the Netherlands. The circumstances that had allowed him to study abroad were not clear. It might due to the business connection the family had with the Dutch, or his study might had been supported by Chung Hwa Hui, the Chinese Indonesian students' association in the Netherlands, which in the 1920s and 1930s offered financial support for ethnic

Chinese from colonial Indonesia to study at universities in the Netherlands, including at Delft Technische Hoogeschool. In any case, the young Liem was a member of Chung Hwa Hui, which at that time was involved in the anti-colonial networks of Europe even though the organization's political character was not always along the line of Indonesian students' organization in the Netherlands.[9]

In 1929, Liem Bwan Tjie returned to Semarang after a period of working in Amsterdam and staying in Paris and Shanghai. He had by then absorbed enough portions of modernity and knew the aspirations of the wealthy class for modern living style. Through his association with the elite branch of Chung Hwa Hui in Semarang, Liem entered the world of elite Chinese peranakan families (*cabang atas*) in Java.[10] For about ten year (1929–1938), Liem Bwan Tjie served as the architects of the peranakan elites. He knew how to build their offices and villas in modernist "art deco" styles. Since many of these elites had a broad exposure to modern metropolis, they were able to match Liem's artistic tastes. Liem introduced in his own way "modern-tropical" architectural style (contributing thus to the architectural experimentations of Dutch architects on Indies architecture, which began in the early twentieth century).

The architecture of Liem Bwan Tjie was considered revolutionary by the Chinese community, as historian Handinoto points out: "The house form of Tionghoa (ethnic Chinese) in Chinese neighborhood and the style of Indische house owned by ethnic Chinese prior to 1900 all looked *kuno* (ancient) in the face of Liem's design which offered a sense of a new time."[11] Liem was able to articulate an architectural language for the elite peranakan Chinese one that is simultaneously modern and tropical as well as "Chinese" at the same time. He carried over this architectural language to the postcolonial Indonesia when opportunities were given to him to design public buildings. One could argue that Liem'as architectural language influenced the Maestros of Indonesian modern architecture, such as Silaban and Suyudi, who started their career in the 1960s. Liem Bwan Tjie's architecture is an important part of a search for an Indonesian architecture (as part of nation-building) even though he was not known in Indonesian architectural history until today. Influence or impact is hard to measure, it is not clear therefore how influential the architecture of Liem Bwan Tjie for architects working in the later period. What is clear is that Liem Bwan Tjie knew many of the younger architects. He worked together with some of them to establish the professional association, known eventually as Indonesian Association of Architecture (IAI).

THE NATIONALIST

Han Awal (Han Hoo Tjwan) is a respected architect and a committed educator. He told me that he met Liem Bwan Tjie when he worked as an

intern in the architectural office of Kwee Hian Goan and Soenaryo Sosro. Han is not Liem, but he has won three national awards associated with the Indonesian Association of Architects (IAI) for the design of the University of Atmajaya (awarded in 1984) and the conservation of the National Archive Building (2000) and the Bank of Indonesia (2009).[12] He is also the recipient of UNESCO Asia – Heritage Award of Excellence in 2001 (with Budi Lim and Cor Passchier) for his conservation project. In 2007, Professor Teeuw award committee decided to focus on architecture seen as part of the fields of Humanities and the Social Sciences. Han Awal with Ajie Damais and Wastu Pragantha Tjiong were awarded the Professor Teeuw award for their contribution to foster cultural exchange between Indonesia and the Netherlands through architectural conservation of buildings from the Dutch era.

In the 1960s, Han Awal (and a group of German-Dutch educated Indonesian architects) brought home the idea of European modernism and produced consistently well-designed buildings of modernist aesthetic that are sensitive to the tropical context.[13] Among his peers, he was one of the very few to receive commissions for large scale projects at the beginning of career, such the planning of the Atmajaya University complex (1962–1964) and the revitalization of Kota Inti at Perniagaan street (1963).[14] For the Atmajaya, he applied the idea of contextual design by creating "the park with towers" that would nurture the appearance of the clover leaf Semanggi bypass of the Sukarno era. For the revitalization of Kota Inti, he introduced (perhaps for the first time in Indonesian architectural culture) the concept of "mixed use" where commercial and public services intersect with residences. All these were considered innovative and unique at the time. Han Awal's works have spanned over half a century and he continues to shape the architectural discourses of the subsequent generation of architects. A modernist at heart, he nevertheless shows significantly the importance of old buildings and vernacular settlements from different cultures and how to conserve them for the future of Indonesian built environment.

Han Awal was born into a peranakan Chinese family in Malang in 1930 and baptized as a Catholic in 1959. He was already interested in the art of spatial arrangement since childhood, perhaps influenced by his grandfather who worked for a local theatre as a stage decorator. By the time he graduated from high school (at RK HBS Albertus Malang), Han Awal was already determined to pursue his interest in architecture (even though there was no architecture school yet at the time). The scholarship from the archbishop of Malang allowed Han Awal to study at the Technische Hoogeschool at Delft in 1950. The conflict between Indonesia and the Netherlands over West Guinea (today's Irian Jaya) however pushed him to leave Delft for Technische Universitat Berlin, then known as one of the centres for the development of modernist architecture in Europe.

Han Awal was clearly absorbed by the professional training in Europe, but he was equally concerned with the struggles of Indonesia after decolonization. Back home, the political circumstances around the 1950s were marked by the struggles to give the liberated Indonesia a proper "national" form. It was then also the trial time for ethnic Chinese over issues of identity in post-colonial Indonesia. All these historical circumstances seem to have shaped (consciously or unconsciously) the intellectual life of Han Awal and they have found their ways into his creative works as an architect.

Han Awal was, in a way, a product of "exile," in the sense that his identity was significantly formed while he was away from home. His professional training came in tandem with a search for an identity for himself as well as for his Indonesia. In Europe he joined Chung Hwa Hui an organization (perhaps following Liem Bwan Tjie?) that concerned with the position of ethnic Chinese in Indonesian nationalism. In some way, his architecture training came as a solution to the dilemma of identity. He manages to show that he is not only an ethnic Chinese, but also an "architect" who, by virtue of his professional training, is capable of contributing to the course of Indonesian nation-building. We can see here a process of identity formation of a Chinese Catholic by way of becoming an architect and an Indonesian. This process is individual as well as collective and social.

During the course of his study in Europe, Han Awal met a generation of Indonesian architects who came from various ethnic backgrounds [such as Liem Bianpoen (born in Mojokerto in 1930), Soewondo B. Sutedjo, Mustafa Pamoentjak and Soejoedi Wiryoatmodjo)].

Together, they considered themselves as not only engineers but also intellectuals who (through their expertise) sought to find a "form" for the young nation of Indonesia. They constituted a group called ATAP (the roof), which signified their attempt to address issues of identity in architecture and the crisis of housing in Indonesia.[15] They knew that they lived in the modern world by which their nation had been produced. Yet they also knew that being trained in the West, their challenge was not so much about knowledge transfer but more about the specific needs of Indonesia. They sought (each in his own way) to find a way to make their knowledge relevant for the specific context of Indonesia. For himself, Han Awal develops a special affinity with the language of modernist architecture for it speaks for the universal while embodies itself in the specific functionality of human life. A modernist by intuition and inclination, Han Awal approaches architecture with a strong sense of place and locality. Like his immediate peers from the 1960s, Han Awal believes that architecture and space are constitutive element for social change and nation-building.

They were the product of the time when architectural choices were seen as intertwined with views of societal reform. Liem Bianpoen (who designed

Figure 7.1 Han Awal (right) and Soewondo Sutedjo in Delft in the 1950s (courtesy of Soewondo Sutedjo).

Kristoforus' church) believed that "Indonesian architecture, whatever form it might take, has to be the product of Indonesian without following traditional architecture."[16] Meanwhile, Kwee Hin Goan, who was the first generation graduated from Bandung Institute of Technology in 1958, built up his career through a series of design associated with nationalism. Kwee's design entrée for the National Monument was acknowledged as one of the best. In 1957, he won first place for his design of Indonesian Pavilion for a Jakarta Industrial Fair (Pekan Raya Industri Jakarta). Prior to leaving for Holland where he has spent the rest of his life, Kwee participated in the design of the Press Building, Semanggi Clover Bridge, and villas for the families of Sukarno and Adam Malik (former vice-president of Indonesia, 1978–1983).

Meanwhile Han Awal assisted several projects including the design of CONEFO [(today's parliament building complex – Gedung MPR/DPR (1964–1972)], which was led by architect Sujudi. The Catholic University of Atmajaya (built in 1962–1964 and awarded by IAI in 1984) was designed not only for the functionality of study, but also to encourage students to interact outside the classroom. The plaza-like lobby at the ground level is the place for the formation of "national subjects" as part of the efforts of nation-building. The unifying open space however is not only meant for the glorification of unity under an authority, but it is a space for the production of a "public sphere" where a critical body of students could interact, assemble and even demonstrate against authority – a practice of space that found expression in the students' protest of May 1998.

In 1970, Han Awal finally settled in Jakarta with his PT Han Awal and Partners. By then he had already designed many buildings ranging from individual houses, schools and churches to hospitals, pharmaceutical factories, and scientific research centres as well as conducting research on housing for the poor and contributing his knowledge to universities in various cities of Java. At the later stage of his career, starting from the 1980s when many buildings (of heritage value) were torn down to give way to the rapid development of the city, Han Awal registered the importance of urban memory through a series of conservation and documentation of important buildings such as the Cathedral of Jakarta, the Emmanuel Church, Bank of Indonesia, the church and parish house in Muntilan and (with architects such as Budi Lim and Cor Passchier) the National Archive. He also contributed to the founding of the Centre for the Documentation of Architecture.

Han Awal continues to work prolifically while giving many students and young architects a space in which to flourish and contribute to the growth of the discipline. Some of my best architect friends established their careers by first working in Han Awal's office as interns. It is difficult to imagine how the practice of architecture in Indonesia could have developed without his generation providing the edge of discipline, commitment and struggle to find a place in Indonesian history.

THE CIVIL SERVANT

Whenever I found myself in Jakarta, I often visited Wastu Pragantha Tjiong (Tjiong Seng Hong, born in Cirebon, 1934–2011). Tjiong taught at Tarumanagara University where I was briefly once a faculty member. Through Tjiong (who almost always wore batik) I came to appreciate some architects who worked as "civil servant" in the municipality. For instance, Liem Bianpoen (Han Awal's friend from ATAP we have encountered above) is one of the very few ethnic Chinese who worked in the city government, but Bianpoen only entered the municipality after being recruited by Tjiong. Bianpoen and Tjiong were the only two ethnic Chinese holding important positions in the municipality under Governor Ali Sadikin (who held office from 1966 to 1977).

Bianpoen graduated from University of Hannover in 1961 and after two years of working in an urban planning department in the city of Hannover, he returned to Jakarta. He taught for few years in different universities and was an active member of IAI. In 1963 he met Tjiong who, noting his idealism and commitment to work in the public sector, brought him to the city hall, which was then under Governor Soemarno. Tjiong was a graduate of ITB (1960) and was involved in the design of the Asian Games Senayan Stadium before recruited by Governor Soemarno to serve in the municipality's planning

department. Tjiong and Bianpoen worked under two different regimes and saw both the strength and the weakness of the city administration under Sukarno and Suharto. The high point of their career coincided with the tenure of Ali Sadikin as Governor of Jakarta. Ali Sadikin believed in urban physical planning, and he listened to both Bianpoen and Tjiong. Under Sadikin, Bianpoen led the research centre for the study of urban development and environment (Pusat Penelitian dan Pengembangan Masalah Perkotaan dan Lingkungan – P4L) from 1974 to 1979. Tjiong was a key member of city's planning board since 1972 before becoming the city's Head of Building Design and Conservation (Dinas Tata Bangunan dan Pemugaran). Tjiong was involved in the planning and design of public facilities, such as the art centre of Taman Ismail Marzuki (1976), the Youth Centres in five administrative

Figure 7.2 Wastu Pragantha Tjiong in front of Gedung G of Jakarta's Municipal Office (Photo: A. Kusno).

territories of Jakarta, the Student Centre in Kuningan area and the high-rise administrative building for the municipality (known as Gedung G). In 1974, he successfully lobbied for the preservation of Stadhuis by turning the abandoned Dutch colonial building into a museum of Jakarta (known today as Museum Fatahilah).[17]

Tjiong and Bianpoen continued to work for the city hall till the mid-1980s when the New Order liberalized national economy and reduced the power of the City Hall into a mere satellite of the nation-state. They saw their belief in planning destroyed by the interests of capital (see chapter 7). The city hall was then already reduced to the point of only serving the interest of the capital, which was then expanding by way of harnessing the power of the state. Bianpoen, known as a most principled civil servant, resigned as soon as Governor Soeprapto (1982–1987) decided to close down the urban research unit of the municipality. Tjiong hung on for few more years but also resigned in 1985. They both returned to universities to teach and maintain their idealism. I worked with Tjiong as his teaching assistant in Tarumanagara University for few semesters and witnessed how he struggled to change the technocratic tendency of students by bringing into classroom issues concerning the transformation of the city by capital and state power and its impact of mental life of urban population. The subject was over the head of students at the time, but Tjiong continued to talk the way he always did even as he was a lone fighter in a school that had retreated into the domain of design with very little knowledge of the social world. As he was approaching retirement, the department assigned him a "minor" course on building conservation, which he nevertheless used to retrieve, preserve and design sites of historic importance to ethnic Chinese. In his final years, Tjiong was active in the preservation of Candra Naya (see chapter 1), the restoration of the tomb of the first Chinese Kapitan (leader) in Batavia Souw Beng Kong, which was buried under irregular settlements, and fighting for the right of Confucianism to be acknowledged as an official religion, or better, identity for the ethnic Chinese.

Before Tjiong left his city hall's office in 1985, he toured around the old cities of Southeast Asia accompanied by Rai Patradaya (Liauw Tat Yen). Rai was the last ethnic Chinese ever served the City Hall. He was recruited by Ali Sadikin to assist Tjiong. Rai was born in Jakarta in 1940 and entered ITB in 1959. While still a student he was already working for Sukarno's Ganefo project under the supervision of Ir. Sutami, a well-known Civil Engineer. Rai was immediately recruited by Sadikin upon his graduation in 1971. He drafted regulations for building and urban construction. He headed the department of city planning twice and retired in 1996 when Jakarta was totally out of control. After the departure of Rai, the city hall of Jakarta had to wait for almost two decades to have another ethnic Chinese to work in the city hall. Basuki Purnama, nicknamed Ahok, entered the city hall in 2012 as

Vice Governor and as of today he is one of the most powerful Governors of Jakarta for better or worse.

Rai, Tjiong and Bianpoen are all in one way or another shaped by Ali Sadikin who sought to give the city hall the power it needed to organize the city. Ali Sadikin had also sought to harness capital to build Jakarta. In the 1970s, the governor worked with Ciputra (Tjie Tjin Hoan) (whom we have encountered in chapter 7), a classmate of Tjiong in ITB to develop the capital city. Ciputra (born in Parigi, Central Sulawesi) graduated in 1960, but he already involved in the business of building design while still a student. His office was called Perentjana Arsitek, which was soon integrated into a series of design and build partnership with the municipality. A year after graduation Ciputra worked in the city government's construction company (Jaya) and soon led the company to develop profitable projects in Slipi, Senen and Ancol. Towards the end of 1960s, he joined forces with Liem Soe Liong and other ethnic Chinese businessmen to form Metropolitan Group and built two most significant projects in the history of Indonesian property development, Pondok Indah and Bumi Serpong Damai. Tjiong remembered Ciputra as a classmate in a bitter sweet manner. Each of them followed a different path even as they both worked with Ali Sadikin. They both talked about nation-building and city-building but differ in their opinion on by what means were they going to build the city and the nation.

TRADITIONALISM

As indicated above, in the 1960s, under Governor Soemarno, Liem Bianpoen headed the city's urban study team, called *Tim Peneliti and Pengkajian Pembangunan Kota dan Lingkungan* (TPPPKL). This unit was restructured and renamed under Ali Sadikin, which has become, until today, the city's team for the study of urban architecture *Tim Pengkajian Arsitektur Kota* (TPAK). The focus of TPAK has also changed over time. It seemed to have urban focus in the past (when planning was imagined to be central for the construction of a city) but today its focus is on urban architecture. It is also no longer a research unit, but an entity that exists rather independently as a council of architects and serves as a kind of consultant for the city government to control the architectural quality of large scale projects proposed by developers in important areas of the city. Its power however is limited to the stage of design. It could ask for a revision, but its scope of intervention is limited to drawing. Despite this limit, TPAK is still the only agency that could work to control the quality of urban architecture. Today, TPAK is chaired by Gunawan Tjahjono (Chia Yong Guan) who has been in the position since 1994. Gunawan was born in 1945 in Medan. He enrolled in the University of Indonesia's department

of architecture in 1965 and graduated in 1975. Prior to continuing graduate studies in the United States, Gunawan was already known for his success in a series of design competition, which range from mosque architecture to the design of kampung settlement.

I first met Gunawan in 1990 in the architecture department of Tarumanagara University where I worked as a new faculty member. He just returned from UC Berkeley after completing his PhD dissertation on Javanese architecture. I was then his teaching assistant. Gunawan is an enigmatic teacher known for asking questions without giving an answer. He led students from frustration to admiration as they discovered answers on their own. Outside the classroom Gunawan dominated almost every architectural forum as a theoretician, historian, critic and key member of IAI. He is also respected by Young Indonesian Architects (AMI). Gunawan's career seems to have followed the generation of Han Awal and Bianpoen. Educated abroad and returned to Indonesia to cover various grounds from teaching to practising as well as working for the city government. The difference lies in the different eras they found themselves in. Han Awal and Bianpoen brought modernist architecture to Sukarno who saw the future of the city in modernism and had no interest in traditional architecture, whereas Gunawan entered Indonesia when Suharto was promoting traditional Javanese architecture as a guide for thinking about Indonesian architecture. Gunawan also saw what I had seen during my field trip in Jakarta in the 1990s: economic liberalization, construction boom, and the surge of traditional Javanese cultural expressions in Indonesian architecture. His was the era when the government had even announced the intention of applying traditional Javanese roofs, especially Jogjo, to all new government buildings. In response, Jogjo appeared not only on government buildings, but also department stores, office buildings, hotels and houses in kampung. Han Awal, seeing Joglo, once asked young architects: "Is it enough for a building to wear a hat and be called Indonesian architecture?" Gunawan Tjahjono responded to this question by designing the Rectorate building of the University of Indonesia. He presented an architectural form that was based on a typological study of roofs found in Nusantara (instead of only Java). Tjahjono's architecture served as a defence of a cosmopolitan nationalism countering Suharto's Javanism. Without, knowing the building's critical architectural message, Suharto opened the Rectorate building. Gunawan's design won the IAI Award.

THE CONSERVATIONIST

Architects of ethnic Chinese that I have come to know are all respectful of old buildings especially those from the Dutch colonial era. We have after all

lived through the era of development with the state's eyes always looking forward just in order to leave behind the past in ruins. The old Batavia still looks today like a ghost town of colonial past, while old Chinese shophouses in the Glodok area were covered with billboards, which could be seen as a self-erasure of ethnic Chinese identity in the city (see chapter 2). Tjiong, Han Awal, and Budi Lim (whom I will discuss soon) are known conservationists. As indicated earlier, Ajie Damais, Tjiong and Han Awal received the prestigious Dutch Professor Teeuw Award for their conservation advocacy. The UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage too had awarded Han Awal, Budi Lim and Dutch architect Cor Passueur for their conservation of a Dutch mansion.

On matters concerning old town and building conservation, I should mention Andy Siswanto whose work in Semarang is exemplary. I met Andy once or twice only (in Jakarta and Vancouver), but I have admired his works in the rebuilding of post-Tsunami Aceh and in the revitalization of the Old Semarang. Andy is the founder of Yayasan Kota Lama (Old Town Foundation), which took the lead in turning the old town of Semarang from an abandoned worn-out town damaged by floods into a favourite area for tourism and public gatherings. Andy's approach was not only a building but a whole section of the old town that he retraced through an old map so that the surviving spatial structures could be kept as original as possible "to educate the young generation," he said, about the past before they are interested in the question of whose histories are being preserved.

On seeing the old Semarang as a heritage of the city, Andy is accompanied by Widya Wijayanti (Ong Djioe Kwan, born in Parakan, Temanggung Central Java in 1953). A graduate of Diponegoro University and the University of Hawaii, Widya is a co-founder of the Indonesian Heritage Trust Badan Pelestarian Pusaka Indonesia (BPPI) and once the Chair of the IAI Central Java branch. She initiated a series of programme that has led to the revitalization of ethnic Chinese neighbourhood in Semarang (Pecinaan Semarang). A most well-known activity of that neighbourhood is the weekend night fair known eventually as Pasar Semawis. Widya also serves as consultant for Department of Public Works on matters of integrating heritage to urban physical infrastructure. Andy and Widya have made Semarang one of the centres for experimenting with the integration of colonial buildings into a postcolonial public space.

The most interesting approach to issues of conservation however is Budi Lim (born in Jakarta, in 1953). Budi Lim, like Andy Siswanto, is a graduate of a university in the United Kingdom. Budi Lim returned to Jakarta in the mid-1980s. Before practising, he walked almost all the main streets in Java to get a sense of the townscape. At the end of the 1980s he convinced the director of Bank Universal to buy old shophouses on the main streets of major cities in Java. He then "renovated" the shophouses by designing them anew

for the branches of the bank. The result is a series of Universal Bank, which Budi Lim designed in the forms that remind one of the art deco buildings of the 1930s. Budi Lim believes that what can be preserved is the feeling of the old town and this can be done by interpreting anew the past architectural and townscape images of the main streets. He told me a story about his uncle, an ethnic Chinese dandy who dressed up to match the main street of a city in Java in the 1930s, which featured art deco buildings. Many of them were shophouses owned by ethnic Chinese. In this sense, Budi Lim's interest in art deco shophouses could be said as a tribute to the present absence of ethnic Chinese architecture in Indonesian townscape, which had been erased by Suharto New Order. In 1994, Budi Lim's series of Bank Universal received IAI Award. In 2010, Budi Lim was entrusted with designing the Indonesian Pavilion for the World Expo in Shanghai.

HISTORIANS

When I first moved to Jakarta in 1990, and as part of my attempts to make sense of the expanded field of architecture, I found myself one evening among "historians" of architecture. I did not know any of them then, but I remember seeing a passionate group of architects (8 to 10 of them) all males talking about vernacular houses in an island I had never heard of. The meeting was very informal, closer to a gathering over peanuts and coffee, but for a recent graduate of an architecture school like I was then, the substance of the talk was beyond description. Among them, I believe, were Sutrisno Murtiyoso, Andy Siswanto, Jo Santoso and Gunawan Tjahjono (who just returned from the United States). It must be Gunawan who brought me there, but little did I realize that this was a group constituting themselves as members of "Lembaga Sejarah Arsitektur Indonesia – LSAI" (Society of Indonesian Architectural Historian). It has never been clear to me if the society is formal like the Association of Indonesian Architects (IAI), but it has some kind of membership, often by extra donation, especially at the time of crisis. For sure the society cannot be compared with the IAI. There is no office, and no immediate beneficial business network could be made out of this society, but it is a group of concerned architects who talk not only in the language of design, but also nationalism, history, heritage, identity, culture and power. They organized around themselves a sense of cultural (if not architectural) crisis as history (like the city they are living in) seems to have been appropriated for economic and political interests.

The founders of LSAI were Yuswadi Saliya, Sandi Siregar, Haryoto Koento and Sutrisno Murtiyoso. It was formed in 1989 in Bandung, so the gathering I attended in Jakarta was just a beginning (and thus still hot) of a series of

meeting. In 1989, the four co-founders invited some 40 fellow architects to discuss about the mission of LSAI and they managed to formulate something along the line of emphasizing the importance of architectural history for nation-building and the need to safeguard Indonesian cultures. The mission statement was signed by 30 participants. Looking at the list of the signatory, we could see at least 10 architects of ethnic Chinese background. What follows are snapshots of some of them.

Sutrisno Murtiyoso (Tan Koei Liang – born in 1955 in Parakan, Central Java) graduated from Parahyangan University in 1985, and since then he has immersed himself in the world of research and teaching, mostly in Bandung. He published a high school text book on "settlement" and has been researching Chinese temples. He is also very fond of *cerita silat* (silat story of indigenous martial arts) (See chapter 3) and published a book called *Architecture and Silat*. Sutrisno is obviously a book worm. I remember the second floor of his house, which is filled with volumes of books and papers, which he neatly organized into a kind of library for himself as well as for LSAI. It is not surprising that he has been for a long time the Chairman of LSAI. He must be a friend of all the used-bookstores in Bandung and Jakarta, at least.

Jo Santoso (Jo Han Gie, born in Jakarta in 1948) graduated from Darmstadt University in 1975, and received his doctorate from University of Hannover few years later with a dissertation on the historical formation of Javanese town. Jo returned to Indonesia after five years of teaching in an architecture department in Berlin. From 1984 to 1996 he worked as chief planner for different new towns, including Bumi Serpong Damai, Lippo Village and Bukit Semarang Baru. Jo once proudly told me that he introduced to these new towns some progressive concepts and practices he learned from Germany, such as waste and water recycling. He also said that he designed spaces for vendors to operate in BSD, but his design however was discarded after he left BSD. He has often been consulted by the government on issues concerning housing and its integration into urban development. Since 2003, Jo has been teaching at Tarumanagara University and directing Centropolis, a centre for the study of the city, with a particular focus on Jakarta. His publication includes *Kota Tanpa Warga* (A city without Citizen, 2006); *Kosmos, Kota dan Kuasa* (Cosmos, Power and the City, 2008), and *The Fifth Layer of Jakarta* (2009). Jo has brought a wealth of experience into the university and with his colleagues, he is developing a critical planning movement, known as the Grogol School of Planning.

Johannes Widodo (Tan Kok Liem, born in 1960 in Kediri) graduated from Universitas Parahyangan in 1984 and continued to graduate and postgraduate studies in Leuven, Belgium (1988) and University of Tokyo (1996) respectively. For his dissertation he wrote a history of Southeast Asian coastal cities. Johannes is most known as a scholar of ethnic Chinese architecture in

Southeast Asia. His book, *The Boat and the City* (2004), is considered the first book on ethnic Chinese architecture in the region. Johannes is also a co-founder of modern Asian Architecture Network (mAAN) and occasionally invited to serve as a jury for international architectural awards. He is currently teaching in the Department of Architecture at the National University of Singapore where he is also serving as a director of the Centre for Advanced Studies in Architecture and executive editor of the Journal of Southeast Asian Architecture.

While Johannes Widodo and Sutrisno Murtiyoso are among the few scholars with explicit interests in the architecture of ethnic Chinese in the region, there are two other historians who have produced important works on the role of ethnic Chinese in the formation of Indonesian architecture. Pratiwo (Tan Bin Siang) is a graduate of Aechen University in Belgium. He has published many scholarly articles on colonial and postcolonial urban development (some of which are in collaboration with Professor Peter Nas at Leiden University), but his most widely read book in Indonesia is *Arsitektur Tradisional Tionghoa dan Perkembangan Kota* (2010) based on his dissertation on the coastal city of Lasem, which was heavily influenced by the building cultures of ethnic Chinese. Another historian is my former teacher in Surabaya, Handinoto (Ang Seng Han) who introduced for the first time to Indonesian audience, the work of Liem Bwan Tjie (see above). Known as an architectural historian of East Java, Handinoto, who teaches in the architecture department at the Petra Christian University in Surabaya has published numerous articles on colonial and ethnic Chinese architecture in Surabaya and Malang. The works of Johannes, Pratiwo and Handinoto on the architecture of ethnic Chinese are important as they all worked against the erasure of Chinese (architectural) cultures under Suharto's New Order.

KAMPUNG

The ideology of development, central to Suharto's New Order, has deterritorialized not only old buildings and redefined the idea of heritage, but it has also evicted and relocated kampung settlements. In the previous chapter on developers, we have seen the involvement of ethnic Chinese developers in the urban development of Jakarta and its association with deterritorialization and displacement of kampung. Little is known however on the involvement of ethnic Chinese architects in defending the rights of kampung to stay in the city.

Andy Siswanto, whom we have encountered in the previous section, has done a lot on upgrading kampung in Semarang. In 1994 at the height of kampung eviction, Andy developed a concept of kampung as a site for economic

and social development. He sought to counter the perception of kampung as problematic, by showing the potentiality of kampung for the future of Indonesian city. In 1994, Andy implemented "participatory planning" and "community design" approaches in the upgrading of Kampung Bandarhardjo.[18] He was then trying to focus on the re-territorialization of kampung by bringing in physical infrastructure to improve the social life of kampung inhabitants, a process that involved kampung inhabitants as early as the design-planning stage. The upgrading of Kampung Bandarhardjo received Dubai Award from the United Nations.

On matters concerning kampung, the most well-known person is Johan Silas (Ong Tjien Liang, born in Samarinda in 1936). Johan Silas graduated from ITB in 1963 and since then taught at Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember Surabaya (ITS). His name is almost identical with kampung. He contributed in no small measure to the relative success of Kampung Improvement Project (KIP) in Surabaya (compare to Jakarta). Johan Silas believes that Indonesian cities would have no meaning without their kampung. The city therefore has to share space with kampung. Johan Silas could be seen as establishing a relational mode of thinking to show how labours (mostly found in kampung) are needed to sustain the development of the city. Considering the rapid expansion of city, one could raise a question about the future of kampung, but Johan Silas has made it clear that "as long as there is still kampung, which means *orang kecil* (the poor and the marginal), academician like myself will never rest (in defending kampung)."[19] For over 30 years Johan Silas has fought for kampung. He has received numerous awards and honours from national and international agencies including the Habitat Scroll of Honor. Johan Silas's concern over the poor and the marginal has also brought him to Aceh to get involved in the rebuilding of settlements for victims of Tsunami.

Johan Silas and Andy Siswanto could be said as belonging to a generation that struggled for kampung under the sociopolitical environment of Suharto's discourse of development. Concerns over kampung however are not isolated to that era. Kampung continues to be a precarious site, and it continues to challenge architects today. In this regard, one of the most respected young architects of ethnic Chinese is Yu Sing (born in Bandung, in 1976). Yu Sing graduated from ITB in 1999 (just a year after Suharto stepped down) and he is clearly a post-Suharto generation. Yu Sing however already inherited the work and legacy of Johan Silas and Andy Siswanto in a sense that he has devoted a lot of his works on designing housing for low-income population. He has won several awards, and the ones that most caught the attention of fellow architects, were his designs of low cost housing. He has also published a well-received book called *Mimpi Rumah Murah* (Dreaming for an Inexpensive House, 2009), which is a book responding to the call for "papan untuk semua" (a house for everyone). He shows that low-cost dwelling and quality

design can come together. Yu Sing has effectively dislodged the image of architect serving only the wealthy class. He introduces the concept of social space in architectural design. And most recently his design proposal for a floating riverside settlement at Kampung Pulo was warmly received by communities and was almost accepted by the Governor of Jakarta.

LOCALITY

In the early 1990s, I met an impressive group of young architects in Jakarta (who grew up in the Suharto era) who named themselves "Young Indonesian Architects" (Arsitek Muda Indonesia – AMI). They are interesting in the sense that they found their space of resistance in the presumed autonomy of "pure design," which they considered as beyond or below ideology. The key members of the group include Andra Martin, Bambang Eryudhawan, Marco Kusumawijaya, Sarjono Sani, Sonny Susanto and Yori Antar. AMI was able to unify the spirit of young architects of their generation to counter IAI, which they considered as a symbol of establishment. I remember attending a workshop in the early 1990s, where AMI and IAI confronted each other through a face to face debate over issues concerning the past and future of Indonesian architecture. Four of the key members are likely ethnic Chinese but due to the unavailability of info, I can only discuss one who is identifiably ethnic Chinese, largely because his father is Han Awal (Han Hoo Tjawn) whom we have discussed.

Yori Antar (born in 1962, in Jakarta) is the son of Han Awal. He graduated from the University of Indonesia in 1988. From Han, I know that Yori is not so interested in issues of ethnic identity (especially in regards to his ethnic Chinese background). For Yori, architects have a larger mission and that professional identity is best achieved through professionalism than any affiliation with particular ethnic group. This seems to be a respectful position to take, and as a matter of historical fact, Yori's father, Han Awal, when he was Yori's age, also considered ethnicity as something to be overcome, ideally by the professionalism of an architect. What has also brought Yori to his father is their shared interest in documentation especially of vernacular buildings and colonial architecture. Yori is known not only for his architectural design, but also for his photographic works. His camera has given live to many old buildings, and his framing of vernacular dwellings have made them hopeful resources for the invention of new architecture. Yori is particularly interested in teasing out the *genius loci* of vernacular built environment. An educator like his father, Yori would bring young architects or students of architecture to villages to as far as Flores and Sumba to learn and be inspired by pre-urbanized vernacular environments. His conservation of traditional house of Mbaru Niang at Wae Rebo in Flores has earned him UNESCO Award for Excellence in Asia Pacific Cultural Heritage Conservation.

Working for the conservation of vernacular and natural environment, for the urban poor and marginalized population, and for local cultures are far from easy. The challenge in part is due to the transformation of major urban centres of Indonesia into some form of "global cities." On the other hand the state discourse of tradition (as discussed earlier), especially in the time of Suharto, has tended to fossilize "traditional" practices. Caught between capitalist modernization and state invention of tradition, Indonesian architects in the Suharto era struggled to locate their craft in a position that is critical to both the state and the capital.

Capitalist modernization nevertheless has produced resistances. Among Indonesian architects, the resistance is understood as taking the form of locality. It is a term associated with resistances to homogenization as well as to side with local communities, to help the weak and the marginalized in the face of powerful forces. I have indicated above how Yori Antar sees in vernacular environment as an expression of locality and also the hope for the future of architecture. For Eko Prawoto (Tan Khoat Haw, born in Purworejo, 1958 and a graduate of Gadjah Mada University, Yogya) locality is associated with the poor who are living at the margin. Eko has learned to take this position through his master, the late Y. B. Mangunwijaya whose legendary effort to save the riverside kampung community from eviction was totally inspiring. Eko often found himself in the middle of rehabilitating communities through architecture, especially after disasters. In 1996, he built a community centre in Saba, Papua, and in 2006, he built houses for victims of earth quake in Ngibikan, Yogyakarta.[20] His architectural themes are "rakyat" (people), "social" and the "environmental." Eko is known to and respected by people in Yogyakarta. One can easily get a direction from train station to his studio.

Eko and Yori are not alone in their quest for locality. In East Java, Edwin Nafarin (born 1969, and knows that his father's family name is Liem and mother's is Tan) entered Tarumanagara University's architecture department in 1989. Upon graduation he has designed an East Javanese theme park in Batu. Edwin's work poses a counterpoint to the Disney theme park. His is based on the region's folklore, regional history and collective memories of the locals. Through the theme park, the younger generation receives education of local cultures. The East Java theme park is well received. Edwin thus is moving on with his next project, a maritime cultural park in Lamongan. Here local sources from the coastal region of East Java are once again mobilized to accompany the historic tour of Walisongo (the nine Islamic saints).

CONCLUSION

I started this chapter with a conviction that the ethnicity of an architect tells us very little about the architecture he or she produced. First, ethnic Chinese Indonesian

architects have never claimed that their ethnic background matters in their works. Second, they don't feel the need to mobilize architectural expressions associated with ethnic Chinese. Such "disinterestedness" may due in no small measure to the effect of Suharto New Order's erasure of Chinese culture and discourse of assimilation. Or it may simply be the freedom in architecture (or in any other professions) of not being associated with ethnic Chinese. What I have tried to show in this chapter is how architecture offers a chance for ethnic Chinese to become "Indonesian." "Indonesia" here is not something to be taken for granted. Instead, it is something that the ethnic Chinese has to earn through the expanded field of architecture, beyond design to include the domain of history, culture and social activism. Such extension of architectural service allows us to "visualize" ethnic Chinese contribution, which includes a care for the poor, the weak and the marginalized.

NOTES

1. *Yayasan Nabil* (The Nabil Foundation) a social organization established by Eddie Lembong in 2006 with a mission to nurture cross-cultural understanding between social groups in Indonesian as part of the nation-building process with particular focus on producing knowledge about the roles of ethnic Chinese in Indonesian history.

2. Lembong "Peran Etnik Tionghoa di Indonesia: Dulu dan Kini," Terms of Reference for a book project on the roles of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, May 2013.

3. Suryadinata, "Peran Etnik Tionghoa," ibid.

4. Suryadinata, "Peran Etnik Tionghoa," ibid.

5. I have in mind here, Marco Kusumawijaya (born in 1961, in Pangkal Pinang) a great scholar, public intellectual, progressive planner and urban activist. Marco is the founder of respected Rujak Centre for Urban Cultural Studies where several research programmes were initiated such as the Green Map of Jakarta (2000). He also authored several important books on Jakarta, including *Jakarta Metropolis Tunggang Langgang* (2004) and *Rumah Kota Kita* (2006). He co-founded Badan Pelestarian Pustaka Indonesia and once the Chair of Jakarta Arts Council (2006–2010). A key member of Arsitek Muda Indonesia, Marco co-designed Gedung Salihara, a most important cultural centre of Jakarta today, which won the IAI Jakarta Awards in 2012.

6. This category of exclusion includes identifiable ethnic Chinese great architects, young and old, such as Hendra Hadiprana (Hoo Tjoe Heng, born in Bogor in 1929) who established himself following the rise of Suharto New Order. His PT Graha Cipta Hadiprana architectural office flourished since the 1970s when foreign investments flooded Jakarta. He received commissions from foreign banks and hotels. His clients include the family of President Suharto; Tan Tjing Ay (born in 1940 in Central Java) who is an autodidact even though he was admitted to architecture school at ITB. Tan developed on his award winning own a style of "minimalism" where a building is returned to its basic "pure" line and shape emptied of ornaments. Budiman Hendropurnomo (Ong Hoo Lan, born in Malang, 1954) who founded famous architectural design firm, Duta Cermat Mandiri (DCM) and recently developed green

urban architecture. Excluded here (for reason of inadequate info in regards to Chinese name) are Sarjono Sani and Sonny Sutanto, among others.

7. See Priyani 2014.
8. Handinoto, "Liem Bwan Tjie"; Dikken, *Liem Bwan Tjie.*
9. For Chung Hwa Hui, see: Stutje, "The Complex World of Chun Hwa Hui."
10. Handinoto, "Liem Bwan Tjie."
11. Handinoto, ibid., 125.
12. This section is drawn from Kusno, "Han Awal."
13. Han Awal, interviewed on July 23, 2010 at PT. Han Awal & Partners Architects at Bintaro, Jakarta.
14. Soeryono Herlambang, "ATAP, Delft."
15. Soeryono Herlambang, "ATAP, Delft."
16. Soeryono Herlambang, "ATAP, Delft" 96; See also Khow, "Bianpoen."
17. Setyautama, *Tokoh-tokoh Etnis Tionghoa*.
18. "Yang Amat Dibutuhkan."
19. "Johan Silas."
20. Tjahjono, "Context, Change and Social Responsibility."

EPILOGUE

Chapter 8

The Lost Home

This chapter consists of two reviews of two books by Professor Ronald Knapp, an authority in the field of Chinese vernacular architecture. Known for his work on China, since the 2000s, Knapp has expanded his geographical interest to cover the regions outside China. He chose Southeast Asia and produced two comprehensively informative and generously illustrated books on "Chinese" houses in the region. The books are no doubt superbly written and produced, but what interested me then was the books' capacity to identify "Chinese" houses or home in a region fraught unevenly with difficulties in visualizing ethnic Chinese from colonial to the postcolonial eras. I was interested in looking at how Knapp "visualizes" a Chinese house, which demanded a framing of time and space. My sense then was that houses or home associated with ethnic Chinese have either disappeared or frozen as museal object, no longer subject to the flow of time. For Knapp, coming from the field of Chinese studies, the space of reference is China and the time is the era before the coming of modernist architects who craved for a break in tradition. The books thus represents a history of house form that is struggling against the flow of history, as if only then a "Chinese house" as a representation of identity could be visualized. The following are my reflections by way of reviewing Knapp's books.

CHINESE HOUSE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA: THE ECLECTIC ARCHITECTURE OF SOJOURNERS AND SETTLERS (KNAPP, 2010)[1]

Chinese Houses of Southeast Asia is the latest of a series of well-informed books by Ronald Knapp on Chinese houses. This volume is extraordinary

for it ventures outside China to the South Sea (Nan Yang), better known as Southeast Asia today, to document surviving Chinese houses. Supported by A. Chester Ong, a skillful photographer, the result is a book filled with spectacular images, textured narrative and fascinating discoveries of Chinese-inspired architecture. It examines over thirty homes of prominent ethnic Chinese families across different parts of Southeast Asia, including here are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and places in southern China.

Knapp met with the owners, the custodians and heirs of the homes, who provided him with first-hand accounts of the homes their ancestors built. He treats the materials with upmost respect in the form of stunning visual images sustained by insightful narrative. Guided by connoisseurship photography ready to frame their marvellous material possessions, one cannot expect a too critical reading of the homes and their stories. Knapp has made it clear from the beginning that "while many other broad and complex topics associated with the study of ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia – the history of migration, reputed business acumen and entrepreneurship, acculturation and assimilation, as well as tortuous issues relating to loyalty and nationality – are important and worthy of study, they will not be explored in this book" (14). With the political suspended from consideration, colonial policies on "foreign Orientals" and identity politics among the divided ethnic Chinese communities were less of a factor of concern for the book. It matters not if the Chinese of Southeast Asia were minorities or capitalists – the usual categories used by critical scholars – in giving shape to their material cultures.

The book however has a framework and argument. It argues that the almost subconscious structure of Chinese culture continues to influence the house form of the overseas Chinese. Such an argument has been made possible by examples largely selected from the era prior to the emergence of professional architects, as Wang Gung Wu points out in the introduction that the book "predates the rise of professional architects of Chinese descent" (9). Unmediated by the artistic convention of the architectural profession, the house represents the almost "original" world view and eclectic cultures of the inhabitants. Thus the new rich "freely" designed their own house with what Wang called "their eccentric individuality," which for Knapp still remains within the extent of Chinese cultures. The first part of the book illustrates the framework of Knapp's analysis. It discusses the typology of the Chinese "courtyard" house as a cultural matrix that brings together the "old homes along China's coast" (16) with "new homelands in Southeast Asia" (20). With dwelling typology as culture, Knapp could argue that the various eclectic architectures of sojourners and settlers remain within a generalized Chinese spatial sensibility and therefore they could all be considered "Chinese houses."

To the field of vernacular architecture, this book is of great value especially for those interested in the self-representation of the overseas Chinese elite in a place that was politically dominated by Western colonial power(s). At the level of my subjective visual reading there is something uncanny about the book. There is not a single human figure in the contemporary pictures of the homes and yet the photographs depict the presence of all things Chinese. The pictures capture several material objects, such as furniture, paraphernalia and other building elements, which all aim to show how, despite their eclecticism, Chinese people are very much oriented towards Chinese culture. The objects while have a longer lifespan than human, look more like art objects that are preserved to transcend use value. When people appear in the photo they are in old pictures and together with the house, they seem to belong to a different, if not a bygone era and yet the colourful images seem to show that they are all presently alive. Time seems to have stopped at a certain moment in the house ready to be signified as a timeless heritage.

My sense of the uncanny may be caused by the lack of (exposure of) tension in the representation of the houses. This raises the question of whether all generations of ethnic Chinese were culturally oriented towards China and if they saw only the same option in their cultural orientation. Invested with cultural continuity, *Chinese Houses* says nothing about the generation gap. For instance, how were the second-generation peranakan Chinese in Indonesia different from third and later generations? Was there a real break, especially for the peranakan of the early twentieth century? Perhaps the break came only after the emergence of professional architects of Chinese descent such as Liem Bwan Tjie of Semarang (see Cchapter 8), who designed a series of modernist art deco houses in the 1930s and 1940s for a cluster of peranakan elite families who sought to break with tradition by refashioning their houses. Knapp would probably not accommodate the generation that had lost their Chinese skills and even some of the older Chinese structure of feeling. For this modernist generation their fate and fortune in cultural and political terms would certainly be different from their parents and their sense of China and Chineseness embodied in their houses might have been very different too.

Despite the absence of conflict, the book is certainly not without critical messages. Showing the high quality of Chinese "architecture without architect," it challenges modernist architects and the mindless pursuit of rapid urban development, which has demolished fine old structures. It shows the value of a traditional culture that is about to be lost forever, which in turn would encourage efforts to preserve the homes perhaps through heritage agencies. It also shows in painful reality the different treatment Chinese houses have received in different places. The Candra Naya of Jakarta is left alone to die (or live underneath skyscrapers – see chapter 1), while the Tan Yeok Nee manor in Singapore is upgraded with glass walls and an air conditioning

system to house students and professors of the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business in Asia. The fate and fortune of the Chinese houses of Southeast Asia are clearly uneven and they owe much to creative adaptation for contemporary use as well as to the politics within which they are embedded. They are due in no small measure to the country's way of dealing with "tortuous issues relating to loyalty and nationality" (14) and, it should be said, the growing heritage industries of which the book is a skillful part.

THE PERANAKAN CHINESE HOME: ART AND CULTURE IN DAILY LIFE (KNAPP, 2013)[2]

The Peranakan Chinese Home and *Chinese Houses of Southeast Asia* (which I discussed above) were published two years apart, but they could be seen as a coupling. They suggest that, for all their differences, they are to be seen as belonging to a common project, which is derived from Knapp's long-standing interests on Chinese house forms and culture. The main difference, as Knapp points out in his acknowledgement, is in "approach and scope of the narrative. *The Peranakan Chinese Home* takes an explicitly comparative approach, rather than the episodic house-by-house approach of our earlier book, in order to focus on generalizations that help illuminate similarities and differences." The result is an informative and valuable book about the homes of peranakan Chinese in Southeast Asia. Supported again by the superb photography of Chester Ong, the book offers a well-narrated description and systematic room-by-room view of peranakan homes. The book has a quality of an "exhibition," as the texts and images powerfully constitute each other, panel by panel and room by room. Moving in and through the series of rooms, one feels one is entering a huge "exhibitionary space" of an extended family home of peranakan Chinese, with each family exhibiting similarities and differences in their material cultures.

Like an exhibition space, the book is organized around architectural spaces that make up the "Chinese house." The chapters include "facades," "the reception hall," "the courtyard," the "ancestral hall," "the living areas," "the bedroom," the "kitchen" and "signs and symbols." The room selection reflects a decision already made as to what counts as the significant features of the Chinese house. There is here a risk of approaching Southeast Asia through the optic of houses in China which could compromise the specificity of peranakan cultures. Knapp's comparative perspective is productively framed by his deep and wide knowledge of Chinese cultures, which gives the book particular strength, but it also raises the question of how much the peranakan cultures have been shaped by cultures other than Chinese that crossed paths in Southeast Asia. With Chinese culture as a dominant framework, it is harder to

see which items or elements of the peranakan material cultures are borrowed from the locals. We see the Daoist Eight Immortals, the Three Star Gods (Fu Lu Shou), Guan Gong and Guan Yin, but we don't see much discussion on Datuk Kong (the local guardian spirit).

Peranakan is a term for "native-born Chinese" of Southeast Asia, a term that suggests their hybridity and rootedness to local cultures despite their cosmopolitan outlook and global mental world. The term however is treated differently in different parts of the region. For instance the notion of peranakan, while acknowledged, is not widely used in Indonesia today. The Suharto regime referred to ethnic Chinese as *Cina* and only later on as "Tionghoa." The term "peranakan" and its counterpart "totok" (foreign-born, and thus pure Chinese) had no use to the regime, which sought to "other" the Chinese by reducing the diversity or the hybridity of ethnic Chinese and lumping them under a single category. How the cultural policy of Suharto might have shaped the home of peranakan Indonesia remains unclear, and Knapp, like his earlier book discussed above, does not wish to cover the politics of the term.

The complex nature of "peranakan" identity and identification and how it is represented in material cultures is what makes this book interesting to reflect on. The rich images brought back memories of my childhood home in Medan. Compared to Knapp's collection, our home (a 1960s row house in a predominantly ethnic Chinese neighbourhood) and its furniture would be too modern and cheap (should I say) for the collection identified by the book. Our little courtyard was multifunctional but it was mostly for washing clothes and dishes. It was a space filled with the ordinary household activities associated with the position of my mother, grandmother and aunts in the household. It was a gendered space. I wonder how ordinary are the collection of spaces depicted in the *Chinese Peranakan Home*. The book indeed has a mission to classify, clarify and visualize the most exquisite of the peranakan homes, as Knapp acknowledges that "while researching our 2010 book, Chinese Houses of Southeast Asia, we found ourselves puzzling as to how to differentiate residences built and occupied by Peranakan Chinese from contemporaneous homes. It is our hope that *The Peranakan Chinese Home* will help clarify this." Time thus is as important as space. The book however is more successful in its representation of space. It is less able to capture the formation and transformation of the home in response to the bittersweet and often traumatic socio-cultural change of the long twentieth century.

The difficulty of taking time more seriously seems to be acknowledged rather unconsciously, through the first image in the book: The close-up photo of a jolly gramophone with a huge horn. In the early twentieth century, the gramophone was one of the prime symbols of class formation, modernity and social change. It was favoured especially by the peranakan elites for its capacity to acquire cosmopolitan and contemporaneous cultures and bring

both global and local music to the home. Tio Tek Hong, the most known distributor of gramophone, became famous in Java for his dealership and his collection of records, but his own shop, still standing in Jakarta, is left to deteriorate. A lot can be said about this image of a gramophone, along with the "unnoticed" remote control on a table. They both represent time, but Knapp leaves them alone as no word is said about them. This photo is the least museum-like piece in the book. It serves as a silent commentary to what is not narrated in the book: class formation, ethnic tension, cultural policy and the socio-historical change of the home within which it is embedded.

NOTES

1. This section is drawn from my book review of Knapp (2010) published in *Pacific Affairs*, 86, 2, 2013.

2. This section is drawn from my book review of Knapp (2013) published in *Pacific Affairs*, 87, 4, 2015.

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PANCASILA

1. KETUHANAN YANG MAHA ESA
2. KEMANUSIAAN YANG ADIL DAN BERADAB
3. PERSATUAN INDONESIA
4. KERAKYATAN YANG DIPIMPIN OLEH HIKMAT KEBIJAK - SANAAN DALAM PERMUSYAWARATAN / PERWAKILAN
5. KEADILAN SOSIAL BAGI SELURUH RAKYAT INDONESIA

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"*Visual Cultures of the Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia* affirms Abidin Kusno's place as a singularly insightful commentator on Indonesian ethnic Chinese experiences, as illuminated through the lenses of visuality, the built environment and memory."

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"This is a very informative and thoughtful book on visual cultures of Chinese Indonesians. Using visual materials to explain the subject matter, Kusno has successfully presented a complex picture of the Chinese Indonesian culture and identity in the changing socio-cultural and political landscape. A highly recommended book."

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"Kusno forges new ground for understanding Indonesia's ethnic Chinese, their identity and their culture over time."

—JEMMA PURDEY, Research Fellow in the Faculty of Arts and the Australia Indonesia Centre, Monash University

VISUAL CULTURES OF THE ETHNIC CHINESE IN INDONESIA EXPLORES how visual representations shaped and were shaped by how the ethnic Chinese confronted the period of economic dislocation and radical social change during Dutch colonialism and the nationalist struggles in decolonized Indonesia (including the post-1965 and 1998 social environments). How did the ethnic Chinese communities (re)present themselves to both the domestic and the outside world under the changing regimes of representation? How did they visualize, symbolically, their place in Indonesian society? How did the visual shape the "ambiguities" of the Chinese; the perception of the "economic" identity; and the forgetting of their involvement in politics, cultures and histories of the nation? More broadly, how did the visual address the interconnectedness of domestic life, the urban cultural milieu, and ideologies of the state and the ruling class?

This book is a response to two paradoxical sociopolitical phenomena whose convergence is shaping the experience and conceptualization of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. On one hand, the economic, technological and cultural forces of colonialism and globalization have created conditions for the formation of ethnic Chinese capitalists, while, on the other, the state-generated identity and identification have constituted the discourses of othering ethnic Chinese as a "foreign" minority.

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